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## A BOOK OF ESSAYS





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# A BOOK OF ESSAYS

## OF THE UNION AND INTERNAL PROSPERITY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

It is not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis. Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and transient empire from the sea of China to the confines of Egypt and Germany. But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their ancestors,

whilst in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth. Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the Pagan mythology was interwoven with various, but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed that they

deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed, in peace, their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes, in the most distant ages and countries, were uniformly derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch. Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference, than to the resemblance of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves that, under various names and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities.



The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful, and almost a regular form to the polytheism of the ancient world.

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man, rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature as a very curious and important speculation; and in the profound inquiry they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding. Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause; but, as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work; whilst, on the contrary, the Spiritual God of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less religious cast; but whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects; but the ingenuous youth, who, from every part, resorted to

Athens and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed in every school to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept as divine truths the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity; or that he should adore as gods those imperfect beings whom he must have despised as men? Against such unworthy adversaries Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate, as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well assured that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interest of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence the various errors of the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods, and, sometimes condescending to

act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume; and they approached, with the same inward contempt and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators; and the office of Supreme Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy; and they respected, as the firmest bond

of society, the useful persuasion that, either in this or in a future life, the crime of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods. But, whilst they acknowledged the general advantages of religion, they were convinced that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes; and that, in every country, the form of superstition which had received the sanction of time and experience was the best adapted to the climate and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods and the rich ornaments of their temples; but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous power of the Druids: but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism.

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world, who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country. Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the

purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy. But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned, the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman deities. Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies; and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honours than they possessed in their native country. Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.

II. The narrow policy of preserving, without any foreign mixture, the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune and hastened the ruin of Athens and Sparta. The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and meri

for her own wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians. During the most flourishing æra of the Athenian commonwealth the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty to twenty-one thousand. If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens, who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the Social War, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men able to bear arms in the service of their country. When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honours and privileges, the senate indeed preferred the chance of arms to an ignominious concession. The Samnites and the Lucanians paid the severe penalty of their rashness; but the rest of the Italian states, as they successively returned to their duty, were admitted into the bosom of the republic, and soon contributed to the ruin of public freedom. Under a democratical government the citizens exercise the powers of sovereignty; and those powers will be first abused, and afterwards lost, if they are committed to an unwieldy multitude. But when the popular assemblies had been suppressed by the administration of the emperors, the conquerors were distinguished from the

vanquished nations only as the first and most honourable order of subjects; and their increase, however rapid, was no longer exposed to the same dangers. Yet the wisest princes, who adopted the maxims of Augustus, guarded with the strictest care the dignity of the Roman name, and diffused the freedom of the city with a prudent liberality.

Till the privileges of Romans had been progressively extended to all the inhabitants of the empire, an important distinction was preserved between Italy and the provinces. The former was esteemed the centre of public unity, and the firm basis of the constitution. Italy claimed the birth, or at least the residence, of the emperors and the senate. The estates of the Italians were exempt from taxes, their persons from the arbitrary jurisdiction of governors. Their municipal corporations, formed after the perfect model of the capital, were intrusted, under the immediate eye of the supreme power, with the execution of the laws. From the foot of the Alps to the extremity of Calabria all the natives of Italy were born citizens of Rome. Their partial distinctions were obliterated, and they insensibly coalesced into one great nation, united by language, manners, and civil institutions, and equal to the weight of a powerful empire. The republic gloried in her generous policy, and was frequently rewarded by the

merit and services of her adopted sons. Had she always confined the distinction of Romans to the ancient families within the walls of the city, that immortal name would have been deprived of some of its noblest ornaments. Virgil was a native of Mantua; Horace was inclined to doubt whether he should call himself an Apulian or a Lucanian: it was in Padua that an historian was found worthy to record the majestic series of Roman victories. The patriot family of the Catos emerged from Tusculum; and the little town of Arpinum claimed the double honour of producing Marius and Cicero, the former of whom deserved, after Romulus and Camillus, to be styled the Third Founder of Rome; and the latter, after saving his country from the designs of Catiline, enabled her to contend with Athens for the palm of eloquence.

The provinces of the empire were destitute of any public force or constitutional freedom. In Etruria, in Greece, and in Gaul, it was the first care of the senate to dissolve those dangerous confederacies which taught mankind that, as the Roman arms prevailed by division, they might be resisted by union. Those princes, whom the ostentation of gratitude or generosity permitted for a while to hold a precarious sceptre, were dismissed from their thrones as soon as they had performed their appointed task of fashion-



ing to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was everywhere exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute and without control. But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

“Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits,” is a very just observation of Seneca, confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory; and we may remark, that, about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day by the cruel orders of Mithridates. These voluntary exiles were engaged, for the most part, in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers; and the veterans,

whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts, and the most convenient situations, were reserved for the establishment of colonies; some of which were of a civil, and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent and as they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire, which was seldom disappointed, of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages. The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian it was disputed which was the preferable condition, or those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome. The right of Latium, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted a more partial favour. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families. Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the

legions; those who exercised any civil employment; all, in a word, who performed any public service or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances; and the road of fortune was open to those whose pretensions were seconded by favour or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls who had besieged Julius Cæsar in Alesia commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome. Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue. The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion; but in the provinces, the East was less docile than the West to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference

marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannonia, that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains or among the peasants. Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They solicited with more ardour, and obtained with more facility, the freedom and honours of the state; supported the national dignity in letters and in arms; and, at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman.) The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long since civilized and corrupted. They had too much taste to relin-

quish their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power. Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Adriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects.] Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt. The use of their ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians. The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter ex-

cited the aversion, of the conquerors. Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city: and it was remarked that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome.

It is a just though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe soon became the favourite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government. The two languages exercised at the same time their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire: the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price, accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction, the most severe regulations and the most cruel treatment seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. ) In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the

possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude. The existence of a slave became an object of greater value; and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines the protection of the laws was extended to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave; and if he had any opportunity of rendering himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to retrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which



might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse. It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune of their sons, they likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation. Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

It was once proposed to discriminate the slaves by a peculiar habit, but it was justly apprehended that there might be some danger in acquainting them with their own numbers. Without interpreting in

their utmost strictness the liberal appellations of legions and myriads, we may venture to pronounce that the proportion of slaves who were valued as property was more considerable than that of servants, who can be computed only as an expense. The youths of a promising genius were instructed in the arts and sciences, and their price was ascertained by the degree of their skill and talents. Almost every profession, either liberal or mechanical, might be found in the household of an opulent senator. The ministers of pomp and sensuality were multiplied beyond the conception of modern luxury. It was more for the interest of the merchant or manufacturer to purchase than to hire his workmen; and in the country slaves were employed as the cheapest and most laborious instruments of agriculture. To confirm the general observation, and to display the multitude of slaves, we might allege a variety of particular instances. It was discovered, on a very melancholy occasion, that four hundred slaves were maintained in a single palace of Rome. The same number of four hundred belonged to an estate which an African widow, of a very private condition, resigned to her son, whilst she reserved for herself a much larger share of her property. A freedman, under the reign of Augustus, though his fortune had suffered great losses in the civil wars, left behind him three thousand six hundred yoke of oxen, two

hundred and fifty thousand head of smaller cattle, and, what was almost included in the description of cattle, four thousand one hundred and sixteen slaves.)

The number of subjects who acknowledged the laws of Rome, of citizens, of provincials, and of slaves, cannot now be fixed with such a degree of accuracy as the importance of the object would deserve. We are informed that, when the emperor Claudius exercised the office of censor, he took an account of six millions nine hundred and forty-five thousand Roman citizens, who, with the proportion of women and children, must have amounted to about twenty millions of souls. The multitude of subjects of an inferior rank was uncertain and fluctuating. But, after weighing with attention every circumstance which could influence the balance, it seems probable that there existed in the time of Claudius about twice as many provincials as there were citizens, of either sex and of every age; and that the slaves were at least equal in number to the free inhabitants of the Roman world. The total amount of this imperfect calculation would rise to about one hundred and twenty millions of persons: a degree of population which possibly exceeds that of modern Europe, and forms the most numerous society that has ever been united under the same system of government,

Domestic peace and union were the natural consequences of the moderate and comprehensive policy embraced by the Romans. If we turn our eyes towards the monarchies of Asia, we shall behold despotism in the centre and weakness in the extremities; the collection of the revenue, or the administration of justice, enforced by the presence of an army; hostile barbarians established in the heart of the country, hereditary satraps usurping the dominion of the provinces, and subjects inclined to rebellion, though incapable of freedom. But the obedience of the Roman world was uniform, voluntary, and permanent. The vanquished nations, blended into one great people, resigned the hope, nay even the wish, of resuming their independence, and scarcely considered their own existence as distinct from the existence of Rome. The established authority of the emperors pervaded without an effort the wide extent of their dominions, and was exercised with the same facility on the banks of the Thames, or of the Nile, as on those of the Tiber. The legions were destined to serve against the public enemy, and the civil magistrate seldom required the aid of a military force. In this state of general security, the leisure as well as opulence both of the prince and people were devoted to improve and to adorn the Roman empire.

Among the innumerable monuments of architecture constructed by the Romans, how many have escaped the notice of history, how few have resisted the ravages of time and barbarism! And yet even the majestic ruins that are still scattered over Italy and the provinces would be sufficient to prove that those countries were once the seat of a polite and powerful empire. Their greatness alone, or their beauty, might deserve our attention: but they are rendered more interesting by two important circumstances, which connect the agreeable history of the arts with the more useful history of human manners. Many of those works were erected at private expense, and almost all were intended for public benefit.

It is natural to suppose that the greatest number, as well as the most considerable of the Roman edifices, were raised by the emperors, who possessed so unbounded a command both of men and money. Augustus was accustomed to boast that he had found his capital of brick, and that he had left it of marble. The strict economy of Vespasian was the source of his magnificence. The works of Trajan bear the stamp of his genius. The public monuments with which Hadrian adorned every province of the empire were executed not only by his orders, but under his immediate inspection. He was himself an artist; and he loved the arts, as they conduced to the glory of the

monarch. They were encouraged by the Antonines, as they contributed to the happiness of the people. But if the emperors were the first, they were not the only architects of their dominions. Their example was universally imitated by their principal subjects, who were not afraid of declaring to the world that they had spirit to conceive, and wealth to accomplish, the noblest undertakings. Scarcely had the proud structure of the Coliseum been dedicated at Rome, before edifices, of a smaller scale indeed, but of the same design and materials, were erected for the use, and at the expense, of the cities of Capua and Verona. The inscription of the stupendous bridge of Alcantara attests that it was thrown over the Tagus by the contribution of a few Lusitanian communities. When Pliny was intrusted with the government of Bithynia and Pontus, provinces by no means the richest or most considerable of the empire, he found the cities within his jurisdiction striving with each other in every useful and ornamental work that might deserve the curiosity of strangers or the gratitude of their citizens. It was the duty of the proconsul to supply their deficiencies, to direct their taste, and sometimes to moderate their emulation. The opulent senators of Rome and the provinces esteemed it an honour, and almost an obligation, to adorn the splendour of their age and country; and the influence of fashion

very frequently supplied the want of taste or generosity. Among a crowd of these private benefactors, we may select Herodes Atticus, an Athenian citizen, who lived in the age of the Antonines. Whatever might be the motive of his conduct, his magnificence would have been worthy of the greatest kings.

The family of Herod, at least after it had been favoured by fortune, was lineally descended from Cimon and Miltiades, Theseus and Cecrops, Æacus and Jupiter. But the posterity of so many gods and heroes was fallen into the most abject state. His grandfather had suffered by the hands of justice, and Julius Atticus, his father, must have ended his life in poverty and contempt, had he not discovered an immense treasure buried under an old house, the last remains of his patrimony. According to the rigour of law, the emperor might have asserted his claim, and the prudent Atticus prevented, by a frank confession, the officiousness of informers. But the equitable Nerva, who then filled the throne, refused to accept any part of it, and commanded him to use, without scruple, the present of fortune. The cautious Athenian still insisted that the treasure was too considerable for a subject, and that he knew not how to use it. *Abuse it then*, replied the monarch, with a goodnatured peevishness; for it is your own. Many will be of opinion that Atticus literally obeyed the em-

peror's last instructions, since he expended the greatest part of his fortune, which was much increased by an advantageous marriage, in the service of the public. He had obtained for his son Herod the prefecture of the free cities of Asia; and the young magistrate, observing that the town of Troas was indifferently supplied with water, obtained from the munificence of Hadrian three hundred myriads of drachms (about a hundred thousand pounds) for the construction of a new aqueduct. But in the execution of the work the charge amounted to more than double the estimate, and the officers of the revenue began to murmur, till the generous Atticus silenced their complaints by requesting that he might be permitted to take upon himself the whole additional expense.

The ablest preceptors of Greece and Asia had been invited by liberal rewards to direct the education of young Herod. Their pupil soon became a celebrated orator, according to the useless rhetoric of that age, which, confining itself to the schools, disdained to visit either the Forum or the Senate. He was honoured with the consulship at Rome: but the greatest part of his life was spent in a philosophic retirement at Athens and his adjacent villas; perpetually surrounded by sophists, who acknowledged, without reluctance, the superiority of a rich and



generous rival. The monuments of his genius have perished; some considerable ruins still preserve the fame of his taste and munificence: modern travellers have measured the remains of the stadium which he constructed at Athens. It was six hundred feet in length, built entirely of white marble, capable of admitting the whole body of the people, and finished in four years, whilst Herod was president of the Athenian games. To the memory of his wife Regilla he dedicated a theatre, scarcely to be paralleled in the empire: no wood except cedar, very curiously carved, was employed in any part of the building. The Odeum, designed by Pericles for musical performances and the rehearsal of new tragedies, had been a trophy of the victory of the arts over barbaric greatness; as the timbers employed in the construction consisted chiefly of the masts of the Persian vessels. Notwithstanding the repairs bestowed on that ancient edifice by a king of Cappadocia, it was again fallen to decay. Herod restored its ancient beauty and magnificence. Nor was the liberality of that illustrious citizen confined to the walls of Athens. The most splendid ornaments bestowed on the temple of Neptune in the Isthmus, a theatre at Corinth, a stadium at Delphi, a bath at Thermopylæ, and an aqueduct at Canusium in Italy, were insufficient to exhaust his treasures. The people of Epirus, Thessaly, Eubœa,

Bœotia, and Peloponnesus, experienced his favours; and many inscriptions of the cities of Greece and Asia gratefully style Herodes Atticus their patron and benefactor.

In the commonwealths of Athens and Rome, the modest simplicity of private houses announced the equal condition of freedom; whilst the sovereignty of the people was represented in the majestic edifices destined to the public use; nor was this republican spirit totally extinguished by the introduction of wealth and monarchy. It was in works of national honour and benefit that the most virtuous of the emperors affected to display their magnificence. The golden palace of Nero excited a just indignation, but the vast extent of ground which had been usurped by his selfish luxury was more nobly filled under the succeeding reigns by the Coliseum, the baths of Titus, the Claudian portico, and the temples dedicated to the goddess of Peace and to the genius of Rome. These monuments of architecture, the property of the Roman people, were adorned with the most beautiful productions of Grecian painting and sculpture; and in the temple of Peace a very curious library was open to the curiosity of the learned. At a small distance from thence was situated the Forum of Trajan. It was surrounded with a lofty portico in the form of a quadrangle, into which four triumphal arches opened

a noble and spacious entrance: in the centre arose a column of marble, whose height, of one hundred and ten feet, denoted the elevation of the hill that had been cut away. This column, which still subsists in its ancient beauty, exhibited an exact representation of the Dacian victories of its founder. The veteran soldier contemplated the story of his own campaigns, and, by an easy illusion of national vanity, the peaceful citizen associated himself to the honours of the triumph. All the other quarters of the capital, and all the provinces of the empire, were embellished by the same liberal spirit of public magnificence, and were filled with amphitheatres, theatres, temples, porticos, triumphal arches, baths and aqueducts, all variously conducive to the health, the devotion and the pleasures of the meanest citizen. The last mentioned of those edifices deserve our peculiar attention. The boldness of the enterprise, the solidity of the execution, and the uses to which they were subservient, rank the aqueducts among the noblest monuments of Roman genius and power. The aqueducts of the capital claim a just pre-eminence; but the curious traveller, who, without the light of history, should examine those of Spoleto, of Metz, or of Segovia, would very naturally conclude that those provincial towns had formerly been the residence of some potent monarch. The solitudes of Asia and

Africa were once covered with flourishing cities, whose populousness, and even whose existence, was derived from such artificial supplies of a perennial stream of fresh water.

We have computed the inhabitants, and contemplated the public works, of the Roman empire. The observation of the number and greatness of its cities will serve to confirm the former and to multiply the latter. It may not be displeasing to collect a few scattered instances relative to that subject, without forgetting, however, that, from the vanity of nations and the poverty of language, the vague appellation of city has been indifferently bestowed on Rome and upon Laurentum. I. *Ancient Italy* is said to have contained eleven hundred and ninety-seven cities; and for whatsoever æra of antiquity the expression might be intended, there is not any reason to believe the country less populous in the age of the Antonines than in that of Romulus. The petty states of Latium were contained within the metropolis of the empire, by whose superior influence they had been attracted. Those parts of Italy which have so long languished under the lazy tyranny of priests and viceroys had been afflicted only by the more tolerable calamities of war; and the first symptoms of decay which *they* experienced were amply compensated by the rapid improvements of the Cisalpine Gaul. The splendour of

Verona may be traced in its remains: yet Verona was less celebrated than Aquileia or Padua, Milan or Ravenna. II. The spirit of improvement had passed the Alps, and been felt even in the woods of Britain, which were gradually cleared away to open a free space for convenient and elegant habitations. York was the seat of government; London was already enriched by commerce; and Bath was celebrated for the salutary effects of its medicinal waters. Gaul could boast of her twelve hundred cities; and though, in the northern parts, many of them, without excepting Paris itself, were little more than the rude and imperfect townships of a rising people, the southern provinces imitated the wealth and elegance of Italy. Many were the cities of Gaul—Marseilles, Arles, Nismes, Narbonne, Toulouse, Bordeaux, Autun, Vienne, Lyons, Langres, and Trèves—whose ancient condition might sustain an equal, and perhaps advantageous comparison with their present state. With regard to Spain, that country flourished as a province, and has declined as a kingdom. Exhausted by the abuse of her strength, by America, and by superstition, her pride might possibly be confounded, if we required such a list of three hundred and sixty cities as Pliny has exhibited under the reign of Vespasian. III. Three hundred African cities had once acknowledged the authority of Carthage, nor is it

likely that their numbers diminished under the administration of the emperors: Carthage itself rose with new splendour from its ashes; and that capital, as well as Capua and Corinth, soon recovered all the advantages which can be separated from independent sovereignty. IV. The provinces of the East present the contrast of Roman magnificence with Turkish barbarism. The ruins of antiquity scattered over uncultivated fields, and ascribed by ignorance to the power of magic, scarcely afford a shelter to the oppressed peasant or wandering Arab. Under the reign of the Cæsars, the proper Asia alone contained five hundred populous cities, enriched with all the gifts of nature, and adorned with all the refinements of art. Eleven cities of Asia had once disputed the honour of dedicating a temple to Tiberius, and their respective merits were examined by the senate. Four of them were immediately rejected as unequal to the burden; and among these was Laodicea, whose splendour is still displayed in its ruins. Laodicea collected a very considerable revenue from its flocks of sheep, celebrated for the fineness of their wool, and had received, a little before the contest, a legacy of above four hundred thousand pounds by the testament of a generous citizen. If such was the poverty of Laodicea, what must have been the wealth of those cities whose claim appeared preferable, and parti-

cularly of Pergamus, of Smyrna, and of Ephesus, who so long disputed with each other the titular primacy of Asia? The capitals of Syria and Egypt held a still superior rank in the empire; Antioch and Alexandria looked down with disdain on a crowd of dependent cities, and yielded with reluctance to the majesty of Rome itself.

All these cities were connected with each other, and with the capital, by the public highways, which, issuing from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the empire. If we carefully trace the distance from the wall of Antoninus to Rome, and from thence to Jerusalem, it will be found that the great chain of communication, from the north-west to the south-east point of the empire, was drawn out to the length of four thousand and eighty Roman miles. The public roads were accurately divided by mile-stones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property. Mountains were perforated, and bold arches thrown over the broadest and most rapid streams. The middle part of the road was raised into a terrace which commanded the adjacent country, consisted of several strata of sand, gravel, and cement, and was paved with large stones, or, in

some places near the capital, with granite. Such was the solid construction of the Roman highways, whose firmness has not entirely yielded to the effort of fifteen centuries. They united the subjects of the most distant provinces by an easy and familiar intercourse; but their primary object had been to facilitate the marches of the legions; nor was any country considered as completely subdued, till it had been rendered, in all its parts, pervious to the arms and authority of the conqueror. The advantage of receiving the earliest intelligence, and of conveying their orders with celerity, induced the emperors to establish throughout their extensive dominions the regular institution of posts. Houses were everywhere erected at the distance only of five or six miles; each of them was constantly provided with forty horses, and by the help of these relays it was easy to travel an hundred miles in a day along the Roman roads. The use of the posts was allowed to those who claimed it by an Imperial mandate; but though originally intended for the public service, it was sometimes indulged to the business or conveniency of private citizens. Nor was the communication of the Roman empire less free and open by sea than it was by land. The provinces surrounded and enclosed the Mediterranean: and Italy, in the shape of an immense promontory, advanced into the midst of that great lake.



The coasts of Italy are, in general, destitute of safe harbours; but human industry had corrected the deficiencies of nature; and the artificial port of Ostia, in particular, situate at the mouth of the Tiber, and formed by the emperor Claudius, was an useful monument of Roman greatness. From this port, which was only sixteen miles from the capital, a favourable breeze frequently carried vessels in seven days to the Columns of Hercules, and in nine or ten to Alexandria in Egypt.

Whatever evils either reason or declamation have imputed to extensive empire, the power of Rome was attended with some beneficial consequences to mankind; and the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements, of social life. In the more remote ages of antiquity the world was unequally divided. The East was in the immemorial possession of arts and luxury: whilst the West was inhabited by rude and warlike barbarians, who either disdained agriculture, or to whom it was totally unknown. Under the protection of an established government, the productions of happier climates, and the industry of more civilised nations, were gradually introduced into the western countries of Europe; and the natives were encouraged, by an open and profitable commerce to multiply the former, as well as to improve the latter. It would be

almost impossible to enumerate all the articles, either of the animal or the vegetable reign, which were successively imported into Europe from Asia and Egypt; but it will not be unworthy of the dignity, and much less of the utility, of an historical work, slightly to touch on a few of the principal heads. 1. Almost all the flowers, the herbs, and the fruits, that grow in our European gardens, are of foreign extraction, which, in many cases, is betrayed even by their names: the apple was a native of Italy; and when the Romans had tasted the richer flavour of the apricot, the peach, the pomegranate, the citron, and the orange, they contented themselves with applying to all these new fruits the common denomination of apple, discriminating them from each other by the additional epithet of their country. 2. In the time of Homer the vine grew wild in the island of Sicily, and most probably in the adjacent continent; but it was not improved by the skill, nor did it afford a liquor grateful to the taste, of the savage inhabitants. A thousand years afterwards Italy could boast that, of the fourscore most generous and celebrated wines, more than two-thirds were produced from her soil. The blessing was soon communicated to the Narbonnese province of Gaul; but so intense was the cold to the north of the Cevennes, that, in the time of Strabo, it was thought impossible to ripen the grapes in those parts of Gaul.

This difficulty, however, was gradually vanquished; and there is some reason to believe that the vineyards of Burgundy are as old as the age of the Antonines.

3. The olive, in the western world, followed the progress of peace, of which it was considered as the symbol. Two centuries after the foundation of Rome, both Italy and Africa were strangers to that useful plant; it was naturalised in those countries, and at length carried into the heart of Spain and Gaul. The timid errors of the ancients, that it required a certain degree of heat, and could only flourish in the neighbourhood of the sea, were insensibly exploded by industry and experience. 4. The cultivation of flax was transported from Egypt to Gaul, and enriched the whole country, however it might impoverish the particular lands on which it was sown. 5. The use of artificial grasses became familiar to the farmers both of Italy and the provinces, particularly the lucerne, which derived its name and origin from Media. The assured supply of wholesome and plentiful food for the cattle during winter multiplied the number of the flocks and herds, which in their turn contributed to the fertility of the soil. To all these improvements may be added an assiduous attention to mines and fisheries, which, by employing a multitude of laborious hands, serve to increase the pleasures of the rich and the subsistence of the poor. The elegant treatise of

Columella describes the advanced state of the Spanish husbandry under the reign of Tiberius; and it may be observed that those famines which so frequently afflicted the infant republic were seldom or never experienced by the extensive empire of Rome. The accidental scarcity, in any single province, was immediately relieved by the plenty of its more fortunate neighbours.

Agriculture is the foundation of manufactures; since the productions of nature are the materials of art. Under the Roman empire, the labour of an industrious and ingenious people was variously, but incessantly, employed in the service of the rich. In their dress, their table, their houses, and their furniture, the favourites of fortune united every refinement of conveniency, of elegance, and of splendour, whatever could soothe their pride, or gratify their sensuality. Such refinements, under the odious name of luxury, have been severely arraigned by the moralists of every age; and it might perhaps be more conducive to the virtue, as well as happiness, of mankind, if all possessed the necessaries, and none the superfluities, of life. But in the present imperfect condition of society, luxury, though it may proceed from vice or folly, seems to be the only means that can correct the unequal distribution of property. The diligent

mechanic and the skilful artist, who have obtained no share in the division of the earth, receive a voluntary tax from the possessors of land; and the latter are prompted, by a sense of interest, to improve those estates, with whose produce they may purchase additional pleasures. This operation, the particular effects of which are felt in every society, acted with much more diffusive energy in the Roman world. The provinces would soon have been exhausted of their wealth, if the manufactures and commerce of luxury had not insensibly restored to the industrious subjects the sums which were exacted from them by the arms and authority of Rome. As long as the circulation was confined within the bounds of the empire, it impressed the political machine with a new degree of activity, and its consequences, sometimes beneficial, could never become pernicious.

But it is no easy task to confine luxury within the limits of an empire. The most remote countries of the ancient world were ransacked to supply the pomp and delicacy of Rome. The forest of Scythia afforded some valuable furs. Amber was brought over land from the shores of the Baltic to the Danube; and the barbarians were astonished at the price which they received in exchange for so useless a commodity. There was a considerable demand for Babylonian car-

pets, and other manufactures of the East, but the most important and unpopular branch of foreign trade was carried on with Arabia and India. Every year, about the time of the summer solstice, a fleet of an hundred and twenty vessels sailed from Myos-hormos, a port of Egypt, on the Red Sea. By the periodical assistance of the monsoons, they traversed the ocean in about forty days. The coast of Malabar, or the island of Ceylon, was the usual term of their navigation, and it was in those markets that the merchants from the more remote countries of Asia expected their arrival. The return of the fleet of Egypt was fixed to the months of December or January; and as soon as their rich cargo had been transported on the backs of camels from the Red Sea to the Nile, and had descended that river as far as Alexandria, it was poured, without delay, into the capital of the empire. The objects of oriental traffic were splendid and trifling; silk, a pound of which was esteemed not inferior in value to a pound of gold; precious stones, among which the pearl claimed the first rank after the diamond; and a variety of aromatics, that were consumed in religious worship and the pomp of funerals. The labour and risk of the voyage was rewarded with almost incredible profit; but the profit was made upon Roman subjects, and a few individuals were enriched at the expense of the public. As the

natives of Arabia and India were contented with the productions and manufactures of their own country, silver, on the side of the Romans, was the principal, if not the only, instrument of commerce. It was a complaint worthy of the gravity of the senate, that, in the purchase of female ornaments, the wealth of the state was irrecoverably given away to foreign and hostile nations. The annual loss is computed, by a writer of an inquisitive but censorious temper, at upwards of eight hundred thousand pounds sterling. Such was the style of discontent, brooding over the dark prospect of approaching poverty. And yet, if we compare the proportion between gold and silver, as it stood in the time of Pliny, and as it was fixed in the reign of Constantine, we shall discover within that period a very considerable increase. There is not the least reason to suppose that gold was become more scarce; it is therefore evident that silver was grown more common; that, whatever might be the amount of the Indian and Arabian exports, they were far from exhausting the wealth of the Roman world; and that the produce of the mines abundantly supplied the demands of commerce.

Notwithstanding the propensity of mankind to exalt the past and to depreciate the present, the tranquil and prosperous state of the empire was warmly felt and honestly confessed by the provincials as well

as Romans. “ They acknowledged that the true principles of social life, laws, agriculture, and science, which had been first invented by the wisdom of Athens, were now firmly established by the power of Rome, under whose auspicious influence the fiercest barbarians were united by an equal government and common language. They affirm that, with the improvement of arts, the human species was visibly multiplied. They celebrate the increasing splendour of the cities, the beautiful face of the country, cultivated and adorned like an immense garden; and the long festival of peace, which was enjoyed by so many nations, forgetful of their ancient animosities, and delivered from the apprehension of future danger.” Whatever suspicions may be suggested by the air of rhetoric and declamation which seems to prevail in these passages, the substance of them is perfectly agreeable to historic truth.

It was scarcely possible that the eyes of contemporaries should discover in the public felicity the latent causes of decay and corruption. This long peace, and the uniform government of the Romans, introduced a slow and secret poison into the vitals of the empire. The minds of men were gradually reduced to the same level, the fire of genius was extinguished, and even the military spirit evaporated. The natives of Europe were brave and robust. Spain,



Gaul, Britain, and Illyricum supplied the legions with excellent soldiers, and constituted the real strength of the monarchy. Their personal valour remained, but they no longer possessed that public courage which is nourished by the love of independence, the sense of national honour, the presence of danger, and the habit of command. They received laws and governors from the will of their sovereign, and trusted for their defence to a mercenary army. The posterity of their boldest leaders was contented with the rank of citizens and subjects. The most aspiring spirits resorted to the court or standard of the emperors; and the deserted provinces, deprived of political strength or union, insensibly sunk into the languid indifference of private life.

The love of letters, almost inseparable from peace and refinement, was fashionable among the subjects of Hadrian and the Antonines, who were themselves men of learning and curiosity. It was diffused over the whole extent of their empire; the most northern tribes of Britons had acquired a taste for rhetoric; Homer as well as Virgil were transcribed and studied on the banks of the Rhine and Danube; and the most liberal rewards sought out the faintest glimmerings of literary merit. The sciences of physic and astronomy were successfully cultivated by the Greeks; the observations of Ptolemy and the writings of Galen are

studied by those who have improved their discoveries and corrected their errors; but if we except the inimitable Lucian, this age of indolence passed away without having produced a single writer of original genius, or who excelled in the arts of elegant composition. The authority of Plato and Aristotle, of Zeno and Epicurus, still reigned in the schools; and their systems, transmitted with blind deference from one generation of disciples to another, precluded every generous attempt to exercise the powers, or enlarge the limits, of the human mind. The beauties of the poets and orators, instead of kindling a fire like their own, inspired only cold and servile imitations: or, if any ventured to deviate from those models, they deviated at the same time from good sense and propriety. On the revival of letters, the youthful vigour of the imagination after a long repose, national emulation, a new religion, new languages, and a new world, called forth the genius of Europe. But the provincials of Rome, trained by an uniform artificial foreign education, were engaged in a very unequal competition with those bold ancients who, by expressing their genuine feelings in their native tongue, had already occupied every place of honour. The name of Poet was almost forgotten; that of Orator was usurped by the sophists. A cloud of critics, of compilers, of commentators, darkened the face of

learning, and the decline of genius was soon followed by the corruption of taste.

The sublime Longinus, who in somewhat a later period, and in the court of a Syrian queen, preserved the spirit of ancient Athens, observes and laments this degeneracy of his contemporaries, which debased their sentiments, enervated their courage, and depressed their talents. "In the same manner," says he, "as some children always remain pigmies, whose infant limbs have been too closely confined; thus our tender minds, fettered by the prejudices and habits of a just servitude, are unable to expand themselves, or to attain that well-proportioned greatness which we admire in the ancients, who, living under a popular government, wrote with the same freedom as they acted." This diminutive stature of mankind, if we pursue the metaphor, was daily sinking below the old standard, and the Roman world was indeed peopled by a race of pigmies, when the fierce giants of the north broke in and mended the puny breed. They restored a manly spirit of freedom; and, after the revolution of ten centuries, freedom became the happy parent of taste and science.

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## THE OLD AND THE NEW SCHOOLMASTER

My reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays, and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions, and ways of feeling. In every thing that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in king John's days. I know less geography than a schoolboy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness—and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe, that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me,

I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation: Of history and chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first*, in my fancy. I make the widest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend M., with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have ‘small Latin and less Greek.’ I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers—not from the circumstance of my being town-born—for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it ‘on Devon’s leafy shores,’—and am no less at a loss among purely town-objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes.—Not that I affect ignorance—but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder, how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world, as I have done,

upon so meagre a stock. But the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; every body is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. But in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling. The truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much, as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me. I lately got into a dilemma of this sort.

In one of my daily jaunts between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell, the coach stopped to take up a staid-looking gentleman, about the wrong side of thirty, who was giving his parting directions (while the steps were adjusting), in a tone of mild authority, to a tall youth, who seemed to be neither his clerk, his son, nor his servant, but something partaking of all three. The youth was dismissed, and we drove on. As we were the sole passengers, he naturally enough addressed his conversation to me; and we discussed the merits of the fare, the civility and punctuality of the driver; the circumstance of an opposition coach having been lately set up, with the probabilities of its success—to all which I was enabled to return pretty satisfactory answers, having been drilled into this kind of etiquette by some years' daily practice of riding to and fro in the stage afore-

said—when he suddenly alarmed me by a startling question, whether I had seen the show of prize cattle that morning in Smithfield? Now as I had not seen it, and do not greatly care for such sort of exhibitions, I was obliged to return a cold negative. He seemed a little mortified, as well as astonished, at my declaration, as (it appeared) he was just come fresh from the sight, and doubtless had hoped to compare notes on the subject. However, he assured me that I had lost a fine treat, as it far exceeded the show of last year. We were now approaching Norton Falgate, when the sight of some shop-goods *ticketed* freshened him up into a dissertation upon the cheapness of cottons this spring. I was now a little in heart, as the nature of my morning avocations had brought me into some sort of familiarity with the raw material; and I was surprised to find how eloquent I was becoming on the state of the India market—when, presently, he dashed my incipient vanity to the earth at once, by inquiring whether I had ever made any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London. Had he asked of me, what song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might, with Sir Thomas Browne, have hazarded a ‘wide solution.’\*

\* Urn Burial.

My companion saw my embarrassment, and, the almshouses beyond Shoreditch just coming in view, with great good-nature and dexterity, shifted his conversation to the subject of public charities; which led to the comparative merits of provision for the poor in past and present times, with observations on the old monastic institutions, and charitable orders; but, finding me rather dimly impressed with some glimmering notions from old poetic associations, than strongly fortified with any speculations reducible to calculation on the subject, he gave the matter up; and, the country beginning to open more and more upon us, as we approached the turnpike at Kingsland (the destined termination of his journey), he put a home thrust upon me, in the most unfortunate position he could have chosen, by advancing some queries relative to the North Pole Expedition. While I was muttering out something about the Panorama of those strange regions (which I had actually seen), by way of parrying the question, the coach stopping relieved me from any further apprehensions. My companion getting out, left me in the comfortable possession of my ignorance; and I heard him, as he went off, putting questions to an outside passenger, who had alighted with him, regarding an epidemic disorder, that had been rife about Dalston; and which, my friend assured him, had gone through five or six schools in that



neighbourhood. The truth now flashed upon me, that my companion was a schoolmaster; and that the youth, whom he had parted from at our first acquaintance, must have been one of the bigger boys, or the usher.—He was evidently a kind-hearted man, who did not seem so much desirous of provoking discussion by the questions which he put, as of obtaining information at any rate. It did not appear that he took any interest, either, in such kind of inquiries, for their own sake; but that he was in some way bound to seek for knowledge. A greenish-coloured coat, which he had on, forbade me to surmise that he was a clergyman. The adventure gave birth to some reflections on the difference between persons of his profession in past and present times.

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres: who believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes, and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped

from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori* and their *Spicilegia*; in Arcadia still, but kings; the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to king Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward tyro, serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa, or a clown Damætas!

With what a savour doth the Preface to Colet's, or (as it is sometimes called) Paul's Accidence, set forth! 'To exhort every man to the learning of grammar, that intendeth to attain the understanding of the tongues, wherein is contained a great treasury of wisdom and knowledge, it would seem but vain and lost labour; for so much as it is known, that nothing can surely be ended, whose beginning is either feeble or faulty; and no building be perfect, whereas the foundation and ground-work is ready to fall, and unable to uphold the burden of the frame.' How well doth this stately preamble (comparable to those which Milton commendeth as 'having been the usage to prefix to some solemn law, then first promulgated by Solon, or Lycurgus') correspond with and illustrate that pious zeal for conformity, expressed in a succeeding clause, which would fence about

grammar-rules with the severity of faith-articles! — ‘as for the diversity of grammars, it is well profitably taken away by the Kings Majesties wisdom, who foreseeing the inconvenience, and favourably providing the remedie, caused one kind of grammar by sundry learned men to be diligently drawn, and so to be set out, only everywhere to be taught for the use of learners, and for the hurt in changing of school-maisters.’ What a *gusto* in that which follows: ‘wherein it is profitable that he can orderly decline his noun, and his verb.’ *His* noun!

The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules.

The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of every thing, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of any thing. He must be superficially, if I may so say, omniscient. He is to know something of pneumatics; of chemistry; of whatever is curious, or proper to excite the attention of the youthful mind; an insight into mechanics is desirable, with a touch of statistics; the quality of soils, etc., botany, the constitution of his country, *cum multis aliis*. You may get a notion of some part of his expected duties by consulting the famous Tractate on Education addressed to Mr. Hartlib.

All these things—these, or the desire of them—

he is expected to instil, not by set lessons from professors, which he may charge in the bill, but at school-intervals, as he walks the streets, or saunters through green fields (those natural instructors), with his pupils. The least part of what is expected from him, is to be done in school-hours. He must insinuate knowledge at the *mollia tempora fandi*. He must seize every occasion—the season of the year—the time of the day—a passing cloud—a rainbow—a waggon of hay—a regiment of soldiers going by—to inculcate something useful. He can receive no pleasure from a casual glimpse of Nature, but must catch at it as an object of instruction. He must interpret beauty into the picturesque. He cannot relish a beggar-man, or a gipsy, for thinking of the suitable improvement. Nothing comes to him, not spoiled by the sophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe—that Great Book, as it has been called—is to him indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book, out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys.—Vacations themselves are none to him, he is only rather worse off than before; for commonly he has some intrusive upper-boy fastened upon him at such times; some cadet of a great family; some neglected lump of nobility, or gentry; that he must drag after him to the play, to the Panorama, to Mr. Bartley's Orrery, to the Panopticon, or into the

country, to a friend's house, or to his favourite watering-place. Wherever he goes, this uneasy shadow attends him. A boy is at his board, and in his path, and in all his movements. He is boy-rid, sick of perpetual boy.

Boys are capital fellows in their own way, among their mates; but they are unwholesome companions for grown people. The restraint is felt no less on the one side, than on the other.—Even a child, that ‘plaything for an hour,’ tires *always*. The noises of children, playing their own fancies—as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell—by distance made more sweet—inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so—for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accent of man's conversation.—I should but spoil their sport, and diminish my own sympathy for them, by mingling in their pastime.

I would not be domesticated all my days with a person of very superior capacity to my own—not, if I know myself at all, from any considerations of jealousy or self-comparison, for the occasional communion with such minds has constituted the fortune

and felicity of my life—but the habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. Too frequent doses of original thinking from others, restrain what lesser portion of that faculty you may possess of your own. You get entangled in another man's mind, even as you lose yourself in another man's grounds. You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides out-pace yours to lassitude. The constant operation of such potent agency would reduce me, I am convinced, to imbecility. You may derive thoughts from others; your way of thinking, the mould in which your thoughts are cast, must be your own. Intellect may be imparted, but not each man's intellectual frame.—

As little as I should wish to be always thus dragged upward, as little (or rather still less) is it desirable to be stunted downwards by your associates. The trumpet does not more stun you by its loudness, than a whisper teases you by its provoking inaudibility.

Why are we never quite at our ease in the presence of a schoolmaster?—because we are conscious that he is not quite at his ease in ours. He is awkward, and out of place, in the society of his equals. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours. He cannot meet you on the square. He wants a point given him, like an indifferent whist-

player. He is so used to teaching, that he wants to be teaching *you*. One of these professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were anything but methodical, and that I was unable to make them otherwise, kindly offered to instruct me in the method by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes.—The jests of a schoolmaster are coarse, or thin. They do not *tell* out of school. He is under the restraint of a formal or didactic hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society, than the other can his inclinations.—He is forlorn among his co-evals; his juniors cannot be his friends.

‘I take blame to myself,’ said a sensible man of this profession, writing to a friend respecting a youth who had quitted his school abruptly, ‘that your nephew was not more attached to me. But persons in my situation are more to be pitied, than can well be imagined. We are surrounded by young, and, consequently, ardently affectionate hearts, but *we* can never hope to share an atom of their affections. The relation of master and scholar forbids this. *How pleasing this must be to you, how I envy your feelings!* my friends will sometimes say to me, when they see young men, whom I have educated, return after some years’ absence from school, their eyes shining with

pleasure, while they shake hands with their old master, bringing a present of game to me, or a toy to my wife, and thanking me in the warmest terms for my care of their education. A holiday is begged for the boys; the house is a scene of happiness; I, only, am sad at heart.—This fine-spirited and warm-hearted youth, who fancies he repays his master with gratitude for the care of his boyish years—this young man—in the eight long years I watched over him with a parent's anxiety, never could repay me with one look of genuine feeling. He was proud, when I praised; he was submissive, when I reproved him; but he did never *love* me—and what he now mistakes for gratitude and kindness for me, is but the pleasant sensation, which all persons feel at revisiting the scenes of their boyish hopes and fears; and the seeing on equal terms the man they were accustomed to look up to with reverence. My wife, too,' this interesting correspondent goes on to say, ' my once darling Anna, is the wife of a schoolmaster.—When I married her—knowing that the wife of a schoolmaster ought to be a busy notable creature, and fearing that my gentle Anna would ill supply the loss of my dear bustling mother, just then dead, who never sat still, was in every part of the house in a moment, and whom I was obliged sometimes to threaten to fasten down in a chair, to save her from fatiguing herself to death—



I expressed my fears, that I was bringing her into a way of life unsuitable to her; and she, who loved me tenderly, promised for my sake to exert herself to perform the duties of her new situation. She promised, and she has kept her word. What wonders will not woman's love perform?—My house is managed with a propriety and decorum unknown in other schools; my boys are well fed, look healthy, and have every proper accommodation; and all this performed with a careful economy, that never descends to meanness. But I have lost my gentle, *helpless* Anna! When we sit down to enjoy an hour of repose after the fatigue of the day, I am compelled to listen to what have been her useful (and they are really useful) employments through the day, and what she proposes for her to-morrow's task. Her heart and her features are changed by the duties of her situation. To the boys, she never appears other than the *master's wife*, and she looks up to me as the *boys' master*; to whom all show of love and affection would be highly improper, and unbecoming the dignity of her situation and mine. Yet *this* my gratitude forbids me to hint to her. For my sake she submitted to be this altered creature, and can I reproach her for it?—For the communication of this letter, I am indebted to my cousin Bridget.

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## ON THE IGNORANCE OF THE LEARNED.

For the more languages a man can speak,  
His talent has but sprung the greater leak :  
And, for the industry he has spent upon't,  
Must full as much some other way discount.  
The Hebrew, Chaldee, and the Syriac,  
Do, like their letters, set men's reason back,  
And turn their wits that strive to understand it  
(Like those that write the characters) left-handed.  
Yet he that is but able to express  
No sense at all in several languages,  
Will pass for learned than he that's known  
To speak the strongest reason in his own."

BUTLER.

THE description of persons who have the fewest ideas of all others are mere authors and readers. It is better to be able neither to read nor write than to be able to do nothing else. A loungee who is ordinarily seen with a book in his hand, is (we may be almost sure) equally without the power or inclination to attend either to what passes around him, or in his own mind. Such a one may be said to carry his understanding about with him in his pocket, or to leave it at home on his library shelves. He is afraid of venturing on any train of reasoning, or of striking out any observation that is not mechanically suggested

to him by passing his eyes over certain legible characters; shrinks from the fatigue of thought, which, for want of practice, becomes insupportable to him; and sits down contented with an endless wearisome succession of words and half-formed images, which fill the void of the mind, and continually efface one another. Learning is, in too many cases, but a foil to common sense; a substitute for true knowledge. Books are less often made use of as "spectacles" to look at nature with, than as blinds to keep out its strong light and shifting scenery from weak eyes and indolent dispositions. The book-worm wraps himself up in his web of verbal generalities, and sees only the glimmering shadows of things reflected from the minds of others. Nature *puts him out*. The impressions of real objects, stripped of the disguises of words and voluminous round-about descriptions, are blows that stagger him; their variety distracts, their rapidity exhausts him; and he turns from the bustle, the noise, and glare, and whirling motion of the world about him (which he has not an eye to follow in its fantastic changes, nor an understanding to reduce to fixed principles), to the quiet monotony of the dead languages, and the less startling and more intelligible combinations of the letters of the alphabet. It is well, it is perfectly well. "Leave me to my repose," is the motto of the sleeping and the

dead. You might as well ask the paralytic to leap from his chair and throw away his crutch, or, without a miracle, to "take up his bed and walk," as expect the learned reader to throw down his book and think for himself. He clings to it for his intellectual support; and his dread of being left to himself is like the horror of a vacuum. He can only breathe a learned atmosphere, as other men breathe common air. He is a borrower of sense. He has no ideas of his own, and must live on those of other people. The habit of supplying our ideas from foreign sources "enfeebles all internal strength of thought," as a course of dram-drinking destroys the tone of the stomach. The faculties of the mind, when not exerted, or when cramped by custom and authority, become listless, torpid, and unfit for the purposes of thought or action. Can we wonder at the languor and lassitude which is thus produced by a life of learned sloth and ignorance; by poring over lines and syllables that excite little more idea or interest than if they were the characters of an unknown tongue, till the eye closes on vacancy, and the book drops from the feeble hand! I would rather be a wood-cutter, or the meanest hind, that all day "sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and at night sleeps in Elysium," than wear out my life so, 'twixt dreaming and awake. The learned author differs from the learned student in this, that the one transcribes what

the other reads. The learned are mere literary drudges. If you set them upon original composition, their heads turn, they don't know where they are. The indefatigable readers of books are like the everlasting copiers of pictures, who, when they attempt to do anything of their own, find they want an eye quick enough, a hand steady enough, and colours bright enough, to trace the living forms of nature.

Any one who has passed through the regular gradations of a classical education, and is not made a fool by it, may consider himself as having had a very narrow escape. It is an old remark, that boys who shine at school do not make the greatest figure when they grow up and come out into the world. The things, in fact, which a boy is set to learn at school, and on which his success depends, are things which do not require the exercise either of the highest or the most useful faculties of the mind. Memory (and that of the lowest kind) is the chief faculty called into play, in conning over and repeating lessons by rote in grammar, in languages, in geography, arithmetic, etc., so that he who has the most of this technical memory, with the least turn for other things, which have a stronger and more natural claim upon his childish attention, will make the most forward school-boy. The jargon containing the definitions of the parts of speech, the rules for casting up an account,

or the inflections of a Greek verb, can have no attraction to the tyro of ten years old, except as they are imposed as a task upon him by others, or from his feeling the want of sufficient relish or amusement in other things. · A lad with a sickly constitution, and no very active mind, who can just retain what is pointed out to him, and has neither sagacity to distinguish nor spirit to enjoy for himself, will generally be at the head of his form. An idler at school, on the other hand, is one who has high health and spirits, who has the free use of his limbs, with all his wits about him, who feels the circulation of his blood and the motion of his heart, who is ready to laugh and cry in a breath, and who had rather chase a ball or a butterfly, feel the open air in his face, look at the fields or the sky, follow a winding path, or enter with eagerness into all the little conflicts and interests of his acquaintances and friends, than doze over a musty spelling-book, repeat barbarous distichs after his master, sit so many hours pinioned to a writing-desk, and receive his reward for the loss of time and pleasure in paltry prize-medals at Christmas and Midsummer. There is indeed a degree of stupidity which prevents children from learning the usual lessons, or ever arriving at these puny academic honours. But what passes for stupidity is much oftener a want of interest, of a sufficient motive to

fix the attention, and force a reluctant application to the dry and unmeaning pursuits of school-learning. The best capacities are as much above this drudgery as the dullest are beneath it. Our men of the greatest genius have not been most distinguished for their acquirements at school or at the university.

“Th’ enthusiast Fancy was a truant ever.”

Gray and Collins were among the instances of this wayward disposition. Such persons do not think so highly of the advantages, nor can they submit their imaginations so servilely to the trammels of strict scholastic discipline. There is a certain kind and degree of intellect in which words take root, but into which things have not power to penetrate. A mediocrity of talent, with a certain slenderness of moral constitution, is the soil that produces the most brilliant specimens of successful prize-essayists and Greek epigrammatists. It should not be forgotten, that the least respectable character among modern politicians was the cleverest boy at Eton.

Learning is the knowledge of that which is not generally known to others, and which we can only derive at second-hand from books or other artificial sources. The knowledge of that which is before us, or about us, which appeals to our experience, passions, and pursuits, to the bosoms and businesses of

men, is not learning. Learning is the knowledge of that which none but the learned know. He is the most learned man who knows the most of what is farthest removed from common life and actual observation, that is of the least practical utility, and least liable to be brought to the test of experience, and that, having been handed down through the greatest number of intermediate stages, is the most full of uncertainty, difficulties, and contradictions. It is seeing with the eyes of others, hearing with their ears, and pinning our faith on their understandings. The learned man prides himself in the knowledge of names, and dates, not of men or things. He thinks and cares nothing about his next-door neighbours, but he is deeply read in the tribes and castes of the Hindoos and Calmuc Tartars. He can hardly find his way into the next street, though he is acquainted with the exact dimensions of Constantinople and Pekin. He does not know whether his oldest acquaintance is a knave or a fool, but he can pronounce a pompous lecture on all the principal characters in history. He cannot tell whether an object is black or white, round or square, and yet he is a professed master of the laws of optics and the rules of perspective. He knows as much of what he talks about as a blind man does of colours. He cannot give a satisfactory answer to the plainest question, nor is he ever in the right in any one



of his opinions upon any one matter of fact that really comes before him, and yet he gives himself out for an infallible judge on all these points, of which it is impossible that he or any other person living should know anything but by conjecture. He is expert in all the dead and in most of the living languages; but he can neither speak his own fluently, nor write it correctly. A person of this class, the second Greek scholar of his day, undertook to point out several solecisms in Milton's Latin style; and in his own performance there is hardly a sentence of common English. Such was Dr.——. Such is Dr.——. Such was not Porson. He was an exception that confirmed the general rule,—a man that, by uniting talents and knowledge with learning, made the distinction between them more striking and palpable.

A mere scholar, who knows nothing but books, must be ignorant even of them. “Books do not teach the use of books.” How should he know anything of a work who knows nothing of the subject of it? The learned pedant is conversant with books only as they are made of other books, and those again of others, without end. He parrots those who have parroted others. He can translate the same word into ten different languages, but he knows nothing of the *thing* which it means in any one of them. He stuffs his head with

authorities built on authorities, with quotations quoted from quotations, while he locks up his senses, his understanding, and his heart. He is unacquainted with the maxims and manners of the world; he is to seek in the characters of individuals. He sees no beauty in the face of nature or of art. To him "the mighty world of eye and ear" is hid; and "knowledge," except at one entrance, "quite shut out." His pride takes part with his ignorance; and his self-importance rises with the number of things of which he does not know the value, and which he therefore despises as unworthy of his notice. He knows nothing of pictures;—"of the colouring of Titian, the grace of Raphael, the purity of Domenichino, the *corregioscity* of Correggio, the learning of Poussin, the airs of Guido, the taste of the Caracci, or the grand contour of Michael Angelo,"—of all those glories of the Italian and miracles of the Flemish school, which have filled the eyes of mankind with delight, and to the study and imitation of which thousands have in vain devoted their lives. These are to him as if they had never been, a mere dead letter, a bye-word; and no wonder: for he neither sees nor understands their prototypes in nature. A print of Rubens' Watering-place, or Claude's Enchanted Castle, may be hanging on the walls of his room for months without his once perceiving them; and if you

point them out to him, he will turn away from them. The language of nature, or of art (which is another nature), is one that he does not understand. He repeats indeed the names of Apelles and Phidias, because they are to be found in classic authors, and boasts of their works as prodigies, because they no longer exist; or when he sees the finest remains of Grecian art actually before him in the Elgin Marbles, takes no other interest in them than as they lead to a learned dispute, and (which is the same thing) a quarrel about the meaning of a Greek particle. He is equally ignorant of music; he "knows no touch of it," from the strains of the all-accomplished Mozart to the shepherd's pipe upon the mountain. His ears are nailed to his books; and deadened with the sound of the Greek and Latin tongues, and the din and smithery of school-learning. Does he know anything more of poetry? He knows the number of feet in a verse, and of acts in a play; but of the soul or spirit he knows nothing. He can turn a Greek ode into English, or a Latin epigram into Greek verse, but whether either is worth the trouble he leaves to the critics. Does he understand "the act and practice part of life" better than "the theoretic?" No. He knows no liberal or mechanic art; no trade or occupation; no game of skill or chance. Learning "has no skill in surgery," in agriculture, in building, in working in

wood or in iron; it cannot make any instrument of labour, or use it when made, it cannot handle the plough or the spade, or the chisel or the hammer; it knows nothing of hunting or hawking, fishing or shooting, of horses or dogs, of fencing or dancing, or cudgel-playing, or bowls, or cards, or tennis, or anything else. The learned professor of all arts and sciences cannot reduce any one of them to practice, though he may contribute an account of them to an Encyclopædia. He has not the use of his hands nor of his feet; he can neither run, nor walk, nor swim; and he considers all those who actually understand and can exercise any of these arts of body or mind, as vulgar and mechanical men;—though to know almost any one of them in perfection requires long time and practice, with powers originally fitted, and a turn of mind particularly devoted to them. It does not require more than this to enable the learned candidate to arrive, by painful study, at a doctor's degree and a fellowship, and to eat, drink, and sleep, the rest of his life!

The thing is plain. All that men really understand is confined to a very small compass: to their daily affairs and experience; to what they have an opportunity to know, and motives to study or practise. The rest is affectation and imposture. The common people have the use of their limbs; for they live by

their labour or skill. They understand their own business, and the characters of those they have to deal with; for it is necessary that they should. They have eloquence to express their passions, and wit at will to express their contempt and provoke laughter. Their natural use of speech is not hung up in monumental mockery, in an obsolete language; nor is their sense of what is ludicrous, or readiness at finding out allusions to express it, buried in collections of *Anas*. You will hear more good things on the outside of a stage-coach from London to Oxford than if you were to pass a twelvemonth with the undergraduates, or heads of colleges, of that famous university; and more *home-truths* are to be learnt from listening to a noisy debate in an alehouse than from attending to a formal one in the House of Commons. An elderly country gentlewoman will often know more of character, and be able to illustrate it by more amusing anecdotes taken from the history of what has been said, done, and gossiped in a country town for the last fifty years, than the best blue-stocking of the age will be able to glean from that sort of learning which consists in an acquaintance with all the novels and satirical poems published in the same period. People in towns, indeed, are woefully deficient in a knowledge of character, which they see only *in the bust*, not as a whole-length. People in the country not only know all that

has happened to a man, but trace his virtues or vices, as they do his features, in their descent through several generations, and solve some contradiction in his behaviour by a cross in the breed, half a century ago. The learned know nothing of the matter, either in town or country. Above all, the mass of society have common sense, which the learned in all ages want. The vulgar are in the right when they judge for themselves; they are wrong when they trust to their blind guides. The celebrated nonconformist divine, Baxter, was almost stoned to death by the good women of Kidderminster, for asserting from the pulpit that "hell was paved with infants' skulls;" but, by the force of argument, and of learned quotations from the Fathers, the reverend preacher at length prevailed over the scruples of his congregation, and over reason and humanity.

Such is the use which has been made of human learning. The labourers in this vineyard seem as if it was their object to confound all common sense, and the distinctions of good and evil, by means of traditional maxims and preconceived notions, taken upon trust, and increasing in absurdity, with increase of age. They pile hypothesis on hypothesis, mountain high, till it is impossible to come at the plain truth on any question. They see things, not as they are, but as they find them in books; and "wink and shut their

apprehensions up," in order that they may discover nothing to interfere with their prejudices, or convince them of their absurdity. It might be supposed, that the height of human wisdom consisted in maintaining contradictions, and rendering nonsense sacred. There is no dogma, however fierce or foolish, to which these persons have not set their seals, and tried to impose on the understandings of their followers, as the will of Heaven, clothed with all the terrors and sanctions of religion. How little has the human understanding been directed to find out the true and useful! How much ingenuity has been thrown away in the defence of creeds and systems! How much time and talents have been wasted in theological controversy, in law, in politics, in verbal criticism, in judicial astrology, and in finding out the art of making gold! What actual benefit do we reap from the writings of a Laud or a Whitgift, or of Bishop Bull or Bishop Waterland, or Prideaux' Connections, or Beausobre, or Calmet, or St. Augustine, or Puffendorf, or Vattel, or from the more literal but equally learned and unprofitable labours of Scaliger, Cardan, and Scioppius? How many grains of sense are there in their thousand folio or quarto volumes? What would the world lose if they were committed to the flames to-morrow? Or are they not already "gone to the vault of all the

Capulets?" Yet all these were oracles in their time, and would have scoffed at you or me, at common sense and human nature, for differing with them. It is our turn to laugh now.

To conclude this subject. The most sensible people to be met with in society are men of business and of the world, who argue from what they see and know, instead of spinning cobweb distinctions of what things ought to be. Women have often more of what is called *good sense* than men. They have fewer pretensions; are less implicated in theories; and judge of objects more from their immediate and involuntary impression on the mind, and, therefore, more truly and naturally. They cannot reason wrong; for they do not reason at all. They do not think or speak by rule; and they have in general more eloquence and wit, as well as sense, on that account. By their wit, sense, and eloquence together, they generally contrive to govern their husbands. Their style, when they write to their friends (not for the booksellers), is better than that of most authors.—Uneducated people have most exuberance of invention, and the greatest freedom from prejudice. Shakespear's was evidently an uneducated mind, both in the freshness of his imagination and in the variety of his views; as Milton's was scholastic, in the texture both of his thoughts and



feelings. Shakespear had not been accustomed to write themes at school in favour of virtue or against vice. To this we owe the unaffected, but healthy tone of his dramatic morality. If we wish to know the force of human genius, we should read Shakespear. If we wish to see the insignificance of human learning, we may study his commentators.

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## INTRODUCTION\* TO THE CROWN OF WILD- OLIVE

(FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1868)

1. TWENTY years ago, there was no lovelier piece of lowland scenery in South England, nor any more pathetic, in the world, by its expression of sweet human character and life, than that immediately bordering on the sources of the Wandel, and including the low moors of Addington, and the villages of Beddington and Carshalton, with all their pools and streams. No clearer or diviner waters ever sang with constant lips of the hand which "giveth rain from heaven;" no pastures ever lightened in spring-time with more passionate blossoming; no sweeter homes ever hallowed the heart of the passer-by with

\* Called the "Preface" in former editions; it is one of my bad habits to put half my books into preface. Of this one, the only prefatory thing I have to say is that most of the contents are stated more fully in my other volumes: but here, are put in what, at least, I meant to be a more popular form, all but this introduction, which was written very carefully to be read, not spoken, and the last lecture on the Future of England, with which, and the following notes on it, I have taken extreme pains. [1873.]

their pride of peaceful gladness,—fain-hidden—yet full-confessed. The place remains (1870) nearly unchanged in its larger features; but with deliberate mind I say, that I have never seen anything so ghastly in its inner tragic meaning,—not in Pisan Maremma,—not by Campagna tomb—not by the sand-isles of the Torcellan shore,—as the slow stealing of aspects of reckless, indolent, animal neglect, over the delicate sweetness of that English scene: nor is any blasphemy or impiety, any frantic saying, or godless thought, more appalling to me, using the best power of judgment I have to discern its sense and scope, than the insolent defiling of those springs by the human herds that drink of them. Just where the welling of stainless water, trembling and pure, like a body of light, enters the pool of Carshalton, cutting itself a radiant channel down to the gravel, through warp of feathery weeds, all waving, which it traverses with its deep threads of clearness, like the chalcedony in moss-agate, starred here and there with the white grenouillette; just in the very rush and murmur of the first spreading currents, the human wretches of the place cast their street and house foulness; heaps of dust and slime, and broken shreds of old metal, and rags of putrid clothes, which, having neither energy to cart away, nor decency enough to dig into the ground, they thus shed into the stream, to diffuse what venom of it will

float and melt, far away, in all places where God meant those waters to bring joy and health. And, in a little pool behind some houses farther in the village, where another spring rises, the shattered stones of the well, and of the little fretted channel which was long ago built and traced for it by gentler hands, lie scattered, each from each, under a ragged bank of mortar, and scoria, and bricklayer's refuse, on one side, which the clean water nevertheless chastises to purity; but it cannot conquer the dead earth beyond: and there, circled and coiled under festering scum, the stagnant edge of the pool effaces itself into a slope of black slime, the accumulation of indolent years. Half-a-dozen men, with one day's work could cleanse those pools, and trim the flowers about their banks, and make every breath of summer air above them rich with cool balm; and every glittering wave medicinal, as if it ran, troubled only of angels, from the porch of Bethesda. But that day's work is never given, nor, I suppose, will be; nor will any joy be possible to heart of man, for evermore, about those wells of English waters.

2. When I last left them, I walked up slowly, through the back streets of Croydon, from the old church to the hospital; and, just on the left, before coming up to the crossing of the High Street, there was a new public-house built. And the front of it was

built in so wise manner, that a recess of two feet was left below its front windows, between them and the street-pavement; a recess too narrow for any possible use, (for even if it had been occupied by a seat, as in old time it might have been, everybody walking along the street would have fallen over the legs of the reposing wayfarer). But, by way of making this two feet depth of freehold land more expressive of the dignity of an establishment for the sale of spirituous liquors, it was fenced from the pavement by an imposing iron railing, having four or five spear-heads to the yard of it, and six feet high; containing as much iron and iron-work, indeed, as could well be put into the space; and by this stately arrangement, the little piece of dead ground within, between wall and street, became a protective receptacle of refuse; cigar ends, and oyster shells, and the like, such as an open-handed English street-populace habitually scatters; and was thus left, unsweepable by any ordinary methods. Now the iron bars which, uselessly (or in great degree worse than uselessly) enclosed this bit of ground, and made it pestilent, represented a quantity of work which would have cleansed the Carshalton pools three times over: of work, partly cramped and perilous, in the mine; partly grievous and horrible, at the furnace: partly foolish and sedentary, of ill-taught students making bad designs: work

from the beginning to the last fruits of it, and in all the branches of it, venomous, deathful,\* and miserable.

3. Now, how did it come to pass that this work was done instead of the other; that the strength and life of the English operative were spent in defiling ground, instead of redeeming it, and in producing an entirely (in that place) valueless, piece of metal, which can neither be eaten nor breathed, instead of medicinal fresh air and pure water?

4. There is but one reason for it, and at present a conclusive one,—that the capitalist can charge percentage on the work in the one case, and cannot in the other. If, having certain funds for supporting labour at my disposal, I pay men merely to keep

\* 'A fearful occurrence took place a few days since, near Wolverhampton. Thomas Snape, aged nineteen, was on duty as the 'keeper' of a blast furnace at Deepfield, assisted by John Gardner, aged eighteen, and Joseph Swift, aged thirty-seven. The furnace contained four tons of molten iron, and an equal amount of cinders, and ought to have been run out at 7.30 p.m. But Snape and his mates, engaged in talking and drinking, neglected their duty, and, in the meantime, the iron rose in the furnace until it reached a pipe wherein water was contained. Just as the men had stripped, and were proceeding to tap the furnace, the water in the pipe, converted into steam, burst down its front and let loose on them the molten metal, which instantaneously consumed Gardner: Snape, terribly burnt, and mad with pain, leaped into the canal and then ran home and fell dead on the threshold; Swift survived to reach the hospital, where he died too.'

my ground in order, my money is, in that function, spent once for all; but if I pay them to dig iron out of my ground, and work it, and sell it, I can charge rent for the ground, and per-centage both on the manufacture and the sale, and make my capital profitable in these three by-ways. The greater part of the profitable investment of capital, in the present day, is in operations of this kind, in which the public is persuaded to buy something of no use to it, on production or sale of which the capitalist may charge per-centage; the said public remaining all the while under the persuasion that the per-centages thus obtained are real national gains, whereas, they are merely filchings out of light pockets, to swell heavy ones.

5. Thus, the Croydon publican buys the iron railing, to make himself more conspicuous to drunkards. The public housekeeper on the other side of the way presently buys another railing, to out-rail him with. Both are, as to their *relative* attractiveness, just where they were before; but they have both lost the price of the railings; which they must either themselves finally lose, or make their aforesaid customers, the amateurs of railings, pay, by raising the price of their beer, or adulterating it. Either the publicans, or their customers, are thus poorer by *precisely what the capitalist has gained*; and the value of the industry itself, meantime, has been

lost to the nation; the iron bars, in that form and place, being wholly useless.

6. It is this mode of taxation of the poor by the rich which is referred to in the text,\* in comparing the modern acquisitive power of capital with that of the lance and sword; the only difference being that the levy of blackmail in old times was by force, and is now by <sup>u</sup>cozening. The old rider and <sup>ea</sup>reiver frankly quartered himself on the publican for the night; —the modern one merely makes his lance into an iron spike, and persuades his host to buy it. One comes as an open robber, the other as a cheating pedlar; but the result, to the injured person's pocket, is absolutely the same. Of course many useful industries mingle with, and disguise the useless ones; and in the habits of energy aroused by the struggle, there is a certain direct good. It is better to spend four thousand pounds in making a gun, and then to blow it to pieces, than to pass life in idleness. Only do not let the proceeding be called "political economy."

7. There is also a confused notion in the minds of many persons, that the gathering of the property of the poor into the hands of the rich does no ultimate harm; since, in whosoever hands it may be, it must be spent at last; and thus, they think, return

\* Lecture I, *Work* (§ 18): "Nay, but (it is asked) how is that an unfair advantage? Has not the man, etc."



to the poor again. This fallacy has been again and again exposed; but granting the plea true, the same apology may, of course, be made for blackmail, or any other form of robbery. It might be (though practically it never is) as advantageous for the nation that the robber should have the spending of the money he extorts, as that the person robbed should have spent it. But this is no excuse for the theft. If I were to put a turnpike on the road where it passes my own gate, and endeavour to exact a shilling from every passenger, the public would soon do away with my gate, without listening to any plea on my part that "it was as advantageous to them, in the end, that I should spend their shillings, as that they themselves should." But if, instead of out-fac-ing them with a turnpike, I can only persuade them to come in and buy stones, or old iron, or any such useless thing, out of my ground, I may rob them to the same extent, and be, moreover, thanked as a public benefactor, and promoter of commercial prosperity. And this main question for the poor of England—for the poor of all countries—is wholly omitted in every common treatise on the subject of wealth. Even by the labourers themselves, the operation of capital is regarded only in its effect on their immediate interests; never in the far more terrific power of its appointment of the kind and the

object of labour. It matters little, ultimately, how much a labourer is paid for making anything; but it matters fearfully what the thing is, which he is compelled to make. If his labour is so ordered as to produce food, and fresh air, and fresh water, no matter that his wages are low;—the food and fresh air and water will be at last there; and he will at last get them. But if he is paid to *destroy* food and fresh air, or to produce iron bars instead of them,—the food and air will finally *not* be there, and he will *not* get them, to his great and final inconvenience.

8. I have been long accustomed, as all men engaged in work of investigation must be, to hear my statements laughed at for years, before they are examined or believed; and I am generally content to wait the public's time. But it has not been without displeased surprise that I have found myself totally unable, as yet, by any repetition, or illustration, to force this plain thought into my readers' heads, — that the wealth of nations, as of men, consists in substance, not in ciphers; and that the real good of all work, and of all commerce, depends on the final intrinsic worth of the thing you make, or get by it. This is a "practical" enough statement, one would think: but the English public has been so possessed by its modern school of economists with the notion that Business is always good, whether it be busy in mis-

chief or in benefit; and that buying and selling are always salutary, whatever the intrinsic worth of what you buy or sell, that it seems impossible to gain so much as a patient hearing for any inquiry respecting the substantial result of our eager modern labour.

9. I have never felt more checked by the sense of this impossibility than in arranging the heads of the following lectures, which, though delivered at considerable intervals of time, and in different places, were not prepared without reference to each other. Their connection would, however, have been made far more distinct, if I had not been prevented, by what I feel to be another great difficulty in addressing English audiences, from enforcing, with any decision, the common, and to me the most important, part of their subjects. I chiefly desired to question my hearers—operatives, merchants, and soldiers,—as to the ultimate meaning of the *business* they had in hand; and to know from them what they expected or intended their manufacture to come to, their selling to come to, and their killing to come to. That appeared the first point needing determination before I could speak to them with any real utility or effect. “ You craftsmen—salesmen—swordsmen,—do but tell me clearly what you want; then, if I can say anything to help you, I will; and if not, I will account to you as I best may for my inability.”

10. But in order to put this question into any terms, one had first of all to face a difficulty—to me for the present insuperable,—the difficulty of knowing whether to address one's audience as believing, or not believing, in any other world than this. For if you address any average modern English company as believing in an Eternal life; and then endeavour to draw any conclusions from this assumed belief, as to their present business, they will forthwith tell you that "what you say is very beautiful, but it is not practical." If, on the contrary, you frankly address them as unbelievers in Eternal life, and try to draw any consequences from that unbelief,—they immediately hold you for an accursed person, and shake off the dust from their feet at you.

11. And the more I thought over what I had got to say, the less I found I could say it, without some reference to this intangible or intractable question. It made all the difference, in asserting any principle of war, whether one assumed that a discharge of artillery would merely knead down a certain quantity of once living clay into a level line, as in a brickfield; or whether, out of every separately Christian-named portion of the ruinous heap, there went out, into the smoke and dead-fallen air of battle, some astonished condition of soul, unwillingly released. It made all the difference, in speaking

of the possible range of commerce, whether one assumed that all bargains related only to visible property—or whether property, for the present invisible, but nevertheless real, was elsewhere purchasable on other terms. It made all the difference, in addressing a body of men subject to considerable hardship, and having to find some way out of it—whether one could confidently say to them, “My friends,—you have only to die, and all will be right;” or whether one had any secret misgiving that such advice was more blessed to him that gave than to him that took it.

12. And therefore the deliberate reader will find, throughout these lectures, a hesitation in driving points home, and a pausing short of conclusions which he will feel I would fain have come to;—hesitation which arises wholly from this uncertainty of my hearers’ temper. For I do not speak, nor have I ever spoken, since the time of first forward youth, in any proselytizing temper, as desiring to persuade any one to believe anything; but whomsoever I venture to address, I take for the time, his creed as I find it; and endeavour to push it into such vital fruit as it seems capable of. Thus, it is a creed with a great part of the existing English people, that they are in possession of a book which tells them, straight

from the lips of God, all they ought to do, and need to know. I have read that book, with as much care as most of them, for some forty years; and am thankful that, on those who trust it, I can press its pleadings. My endeavour has been uniformly to make them trust it more deeply than they do; trust it, not in their own favourite verses only, but in the sum of all; trust it, not as a fetish or talisman, which they are to be saved by daily repetitions of; but as a Captain's order, to be heard and obeyed at their peril. I was always encouraged by supposing my hearers to hold such belief. To these, if to any, I once had hope of addressing, with acceptance, words which insisted on the guilt of pride, and the futility of avarice; from these, if from any, I once expected ratification of a political economy, which asserted that the life was more than the meat, and the body than raiment; and these, it once seemed to me, I might ask, without being accused of fanaticism, not merely in doctrine of the lips, but in the bestowal of their heart's treasure, to separate themselves from the crowd of whom it is written, "After all these things do the Gentiles seek."

13. It cannot, however, be assumed, with any semblance of reason, that a general audience is now wholly, or even in majority, composed of these religious persons. A large portion must always consist

of men who admit no such creed; or who, at least, are inaccessible to appeals founded on it. And as, with the so-called Christian, I desired to plead for honest declaration and fulfilment of his belief in life, —with the so-called Infidel, I desired to plead for an honest declaration and fulfilment of his belief in death. The dilemma is inevitable. Men must either hereafter live, or hereafter die; fate may be bravely met, and conduct wisely ordered, on either expectation; but never in hesitation between ungrasped hope, and unfronted fear. We usually believe in immortality, so far as to avoid preparation for death; and in mortality, so far as to avoid preparation for anything after death. Whereas, a wise man will at least hold himself ready for one or other of two events, of which one or other is inevitable; and will have all things ended in order, for his sleep, or left in order, for his awakening.

14. Nor have we any right to call it an ignoble judgment, if he determine to end them in order, as for sleep. A brave belief in life is indeed an enviable state of mind, but, as far as I can discern, an unusual one. I know few Christians so convinced of the splendour of the rooms in their Father's house, as to be happier when their friends are called to those mansions, than they would have been if the Queen had sent for them to live at Court: nor has the Church's

most ardent "desire to depart, and be with Christ," ever cured it of the singular habit of putting on mourning for every person summoned to such departure. On the contrary, a brave belief in death, has been assuredly held by many not ignoble persons; and it is a sign of the last depravity in the Church itself, when it assumes that such a belief is inconsistent with either purity of character, or energy of hand. The shortness of life is not, to any rational person, a conclusive reason for wasting the space of it which may be granted him; nor does the anticipation of death, to-morrow, suggest, to any one but a drunkard, the expediency of drunkenness to-day. To teach that there is no device in the grave, may indeed make the deviceless person more contented in his dulness: but it will make the deviser only more earnest in devising: nor is human conduct likely, in every case, to be purer, under the conviction that all its evil may in a moment be pardoned, and all its wrong-doing in a moment redeemed; and that the sigh of repentance, which purges the guilt of the past, will waft the soul into a felicity which forgets its pain,—than it may be under the sterner, and to many not unwise minds, more probable, apprehension, that "what a man soweth that shall he also reap"—or others reap,—when he, the living seed of pestilence, walketh no more in darkness, but lies down therein.



15. But to men for whom feebleness of sight, or bitterness of soul, or the offence given by the conduct of those who claim higher hope, may have rendered this painful creed the only possible one, there is an appeal to be made, more secure than any which can be addressed to happier persons. Might not a preacher, in comfortless, but faithful, zeal—from the poor height of a grave-hillock for his Hill of Mars, and with the Cave of the Eumenides at his side—say to them thus : Hear me, you dying men, who will soon be deaf for ever. For these others, at your right hand and your left, who look forward to a state of infinite existence, in which all their errors will be overruled, and all their faults forgiven;—for these, who, stained and blackened in the battle smoke of mortality, have but to dip themselves for an instant in the font of death, and to rise renewed of plumage, as a dove that is covered with silver, and her feathers like gold :—for these, indeed, it may be permissible to waste their numbered moments, through faith in a future of innumerable hours; to these, in their weakness, it may be conceded that they should tamper with sin which can only bring forth fruit of righteousness, and profit by the iniquity which, one day, will be remembered no more. In them, it may be no sign of hardness of heart to neglect the poor, over whom they know their Master is watching; and to leave those to perish temporarily, who

cannot perish eternally. But, for you there is no such hope, and therefore no such excuse. This fate, which you ordain for the wretched, you believe to be all their inheritance; you may crush them, before the moth, and they will never rise to rebuke you;—their breath, which fails for lack of food, once expiring, will never be recalled to whisper against you a word of accusing;—they and you, as you think, shall lie down together in the dust, and the worms cover you; and for them there shall be no consolation, and on you no vengeance,—only the question murmured above your grave: “Who shall repay him what he hath done?” Is it therefore easier for you, in your heart, to inflict the sorrow for which there is no remedy? Will you take, wantonly, this little all of his life from your poor brother, and make his brief hours long to him with pain? Will you be more prompt to the injustice which can never be redressed; and more niggardly of the mercy which you *can* bestow but once, and which, refusing, you refuse for ever?

16. I think better of you, even of the most selfish, than that you would act thus, well understanding your act. And for yourselves, it seems to me, the question becomes not less grave when brought into these curt limits. If your life were but a fever fit,—the madness of a night, whose follies were all to be forgotten in the dawn, it might matter

little how you fretted away the sickly hours,—what toys you snatched at or let fall,—what visions you followed, wistfully, with the deceived eyes of sleepless phrenzy. Is the earth only an hospital? are health and heaven to come? *Then* play, if you care to play, on the floor of the hospital dens. Knit its straws into what crowns please you; gather the dust of it for treasure, and die rich in that, though clutching at the black motes in the air with your dying hands;—and yet, it may be well with you. But if this life be no dream, and the world no hospital, but your palace-inheritance;—if all the peace and power and joy you can ever win, must be won now, and all fruit of victory gathered here, or never;—will you still, throughout the puny totality of your life, weary yourselves in the fire for vanity? If there is no rest which remaineth for you, is there none you might presently take? was this grass of the earth made green for your shroud only, not for your bed? and can you never lie down *upon* it, but only *under* it? The heathen, in their saddest hours, thought not so. They knew that life brought its contest, but they expected from it also the crown of all contest: No proud one! no jewelled circlet flaming through Heaven above the height of the unmerited throne; only some few leaves of wild olive, cool to the tired brow, through a few years of peace. It should have been of gold, they

thought; but Jupiter was poor; this was the best the god could give them. Seeking a better than this, they had known it a mockery. Not in war, not in wealth, not in tyranny, was there any happiness to be found for them—only in kindly peace, fruitful and free. The wreath was to be of *wild* olive, mark you:—the tree that grows carelessly, tufting the rocks with no vivid bloom, no verdure of branch; only with soft snow of blossom, and scarcely fulfilled fruit, mixed with grey leaf and thorn-set stem; no fastening of diadem for you but with such sharp embroidery. But this, such as it is, you may win, while yet you live; type of grey honour, and sweet rest.\* Free-heartedness, and graciousness, and undisturbed trust, and requited love, and the sight of the peace of others, and the ministry to their pain; these,—and the blue sky above you, and the sweet waters and flowers of the earth beneath; and mysteries and presences, innumerable, of living things,—may yet be here your riches; untormenting and divine: serviceable for the life that now is; nor, it may be, without promise of that which is to come.

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\* μελιτόεσσα, αέθλων γ' ἔρεκεν.

## THE COMING OF THE FRIARS

Sweet St. Francis of Assisi, would that he were here again !

LORD TENNYSON.

At the close of the twelfth century a very general belief, the result of a true instinct, pervaded all classes that European society was passing through a tremendous crisis, that the dawn of a new era, or, as they phrased it, " the end of all things " was at hand.... There was a vague anticipation of the breaking up of the great waters, and that things that had been heretofore could not continue as they were.

Verily when the thirteenth century opened, the times were evil, and no hope seemed anywhere on the horizon. The grasp of the infidel was tightened upon the Holy City, and what little force there ever had been among the rabble of Crusaders was gone now; the truculent ruffianism that pretended to be animated by the crusading spirit showed its real character in the hideous atrocities for which Simon de Montfort is answerable, and in the unparalleled enormities of the sack of Constantinople in 1204. For ten years (1198-1208) through the length and breadth

of Germany there was ceaseless and sanguinary conflict. In the great Italian towns party warfare, never hesitating to resort to every kind of crime, had long been chronic. The history of Sicily is one long record of cruelty, tyranny, and wrong—committed, suffered, or revenged. Over the whole continent of Europe people seem to have had no *homes*; the merchant, the student, the soldier, the ecclesiastic were always on the move. Young men made no difficulty in crossing the Alps to attend lectures at Bologna, or crossing the Channel to or from Oxford and Paris. The soldier or the scholar was equally a free-lance, ready to take service wherever it offered, and to settle wherever there was bread to win or money to save. No one trusted in the stability of anything.

To a thoughtful man watching the signs of the times, it may well have seemed that the hope for the future of civilization—the hope for any future whether of art, science, or religion—lay in the steady growth of the towns. It might be that the barrier of the Alps would always limit the influence of Italian cities to Italy and the islands of the Mediterranean; but for the great towns of what is now Belgium and Germany, what part might not be left for them to play in the history of the world? In England the towns were as yet insignificant communities compared with such mighty aggregates of population as were to be

found in Bruges, Antwerp, or Cologne; but even the English towns *were* communities, and they were beginning to assert themselves somewhat loudly while clinging to their chartered rights with jealous tenacity. Those rights, however, were eminently *exclusive and selfish in their character*. The chartered towns were ruled in all cases by an oligarchy. The increase in the population brought wealth to a class, the class of privileged traders, associated into guilds, who kept their several *mysteries* to themselves by vigilant measures of protection. Outside the well-guarded defences which these trades-unions constructed, there were the masses—hewers of wood and drawers of water—standing to the skilled artisan of the thirteenth century almost precisely in the same relation as the bricklayer's labourer does to the mason in our own time. The *sediment* of the town population in the Middle Ages was a dense slough of stagnant misery, squalor, famine, loathsome disease, and dull despair, such as the worst slums of London, Paris, or Liverpool know nothing of. When we hear of the mortality among the townsmen during the periodical outbreaks of pestilence or famine, horror suggests that we should dismiss as incredible such stories as the imagination shrinks from dwelling on. What greatly added to the dreary wretchedness of the lower order in the towns was the fact that the ever-

increasing throngs of beggars, outlaws, and ruffian runaways were simply left to shift for themselves. The civil authorities took no account of them so long as they quietly rotted and died; and, what was still more dreadful, the whole machinery of the Church polity had been formed and was adapted to deal with entirely different conditions of society from those which had now arisen.

The idea of the parish priest taking the oversight of his flock, and ministering to each member as the shepherd of the people, is a grand one, but it is an idea which can be realized, and then only approximately, in the village community. In the towns of the Middle Ages the parochial system, except as a *civil* institution, had broken down.

The other idea, of men and women weary of the hard struggle with sin, and fleeing from the wrath to come, joining together to give themselves up to the higher life, out of the reach of temptation and safe from the witcheries of Mammon,—that too was a grand idea, and not unfrequently it had been carried out grandly. But the monk was nothing and did nothing for the townsman; he fled away to his solitude; the rapture of silent adoration was his joy and exceeding great reward; his nights and days might be spent in praise and prayer, sometimes in study and research, sometimes in battling with the powers of



darkness and ignorance, sometimes in throwing himself heart and soul into art which it was easy to persuade himself he was doing only for the glory of God; but all this must go on far away from the busy haunts of men, certainly not within earshot of the multitude. Moreover the monk was, by birth, education, and sympathy, one with the upper classes. What were the rabble to him? In return the townsmen hated him cordially, as a supercilious aristocrat and Pharisee, with the guile and greed of the Scribe and lawyer superadded.

Upon the townsmen—whatever it may have been among the countrymen—the ministers of religion exercised the smallest possible *restraint*. Nay! it was only too evident that the bonds of ecclesiastical discipline which had so often exercised a salutary check upon the unruly had become seriously relaxed of late, both in town and country; they had been put to too great a strain and had snapped. By the suicidal methods of Excommunication and Interdict all ranks were schooled into doing without the rites of religion, the baptism of their children, or the blessing upon the marriage union. In the meantime it was notorious that even in high places there were instances not a few of Christians who had denied the faith and had given themselves up to strange beliefs. Men must have received with a smile the doctrine that Marriage

was a Sacrament, when everybody knew that, among the upper classes at least, the bonds of matrimony were soluble almost at pleasure. It seems hardly worth while to notice that the observance of Sunday was almost universally neglected, or that sermons had become so rare that when Eustace, Abbot of Flai, preached in various places in England in 1200, miracles were said to have ensued as the ordinary effects of his eloquence. Earnestness in such an age seemed in itself miraculous.

In 1182 a child was born in the thriving town of Assisi, thirteen miles from Perugia, who was destined to be one of the great movers of the world. Giovanni Bernardone was the son of a wealthy merchant at Assisi, and from all that appears an only child. He was from infancy intended for a mercantile career, nor does he seem to have felt any dislike to it. One story accounts for his name Francesco by assuring us that he earned it by his unusual familiarity with the French language, acquired during his residence in France while managing his father's business. The new name clung to him; the old baptismal name was dropped; posterity has almost forgotten that it was ever imposed. From the mass of tradition and per-

sonal recollections that have come down to us from so many different sources it is not always easy to decide when we are dealing with pure invention of pious fraud, and when with mere exaggeration of actual fact, but it scarcely admits of doubt that the young merchant of Assisi was engaged in trade and commerce till his twenty-fourth year, living in the main as others live, but perhaps early conspicuous for aiming at a loftier ideal than that of his everyday associates, and characterized by the devout and ardent temperament essential to the religious reformer. It was in the year 1206 that he became a changed man. He fell ill—he lay at death's door. From the languor and delirium he recovered but slowly—when he did recover old things had passed away; behold! all things had become new. From this time Giovanni Bernardone passes out of sight, and from the ashes of a dead past, from the seed which has withered that the new life might germinate and fructify, Francis—why grudge to call him *Saint Francis*?—of Assisi rises.

Very early the young man had shown a taste for Church restoration. The material fabric of the houses of God in the land could not but exhibit the decay of living faith; the churches were falling into ruins. The little chapel of St. Mary of the Angels at Assisi was in a scandalous condition of decay. It troubled the

heart of the young pietist profoundly to see the Christian church squalid and tottering to its fall while within sight of it was the Roman temple in which men had worshipped the idols. There it stood, as it had stood for a thousand years—as it stands to this day. Oh, shame! that Christian men should build so slightly while the heathen built so strongly!

To the little squalid ruin St. Francis came time and again, and poured out his heart, perplexed and sad; and there, we are told, God met him and a voice said, “Go and build my church again.” It was a “thought beyond his thought,” and with the straightforward simplicity of his nature he accepted the message in its literal sense and at once set about obeying it as he understood it.

He began by giving all he could lay his hands on to provide funds for the work. His own resources exhausted, he applied for contributions to all who came in his way. His father became alarmed at his son's excessive liberality and the consequences that might ensue from his strange recklessness; it is even said that he turned him out of doors; it seems that the commercial partnership was cancelled: it is certain that the son was compelled to make some great renunciation of wealth, and that his private means were seriously restricted. That a man of business

should be blind to the preciousness of money was a sufficient proof then, as now, that he must be mad.

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“ Build up my church ! ” said the voice again to this gushing emaciated fanatic in the second-rate Italian town, this dismal bankrupt of twenty-four years of age, “ of lamentably low extraction,” whom no University claimed as her own, and whom the learned pundits pitied. At last he understood the profounder meaning of the words. It was no temple made with hands, but the *living* Church that needed raising. The dust of corruption must be swept away, the dry bones be stirred; the breath of the divine Spirit blow and reanimate them. Did not the voice mean that? What remained but to obey?

In his journeyings through France it is hardly possible that St. Francis should not have heard of the *poor men of Lyons* whose peculiar tenets at this time were arousing very general attention. It is not improbable that he may have fallen in with one of those translations of the New Testament into the vernacular executed by Stephen de Emsa at the expense of Peter Waldo, and through his means widely circulated among all classes. Be it as it may, the words addressed by our Lord to the Seventy, when he sent them forth to preach the

kingdom of heaven, seemed to St. Francis to be written in letters of flame. They haunted him waking and sleeping. "The lust of gain in the spirit of Cain!" what had it done for the world or the Church but saturate the one and the other with sordid greed?

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Knocking at his heart—not merely buzzing in his brain—the words kept smiting him, "Provide neither gold nor silver nor brass in your purses, neither scrip for your journey, neither two coats, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat!" Once men had changed the face of the world with no other equipment. Faith then had removed mountains. Why not again? He threw away his staff and shoes; he went forth with literally a single garment; he was girt with a common rope round his loins. He no more doubted of his mission, he no more feared for the morrow than he feared for the young ravens that he loved and spake to in an ecstasy of joy.

Henceforth there was "not a bird upon the tree but half forgave his being human;" the flowers of the field looked out at him with special greetings, the wolf of the mountains met him with no fierce glare in his eye. Great men smiled at the craze of the monomaniac. Old men shook their grey heads and remembered that they themselves had been young and

foolish. Practical men could not waste their words upon the folly of the thing. Rich men, serenely confident of their position, affirmed that they knew of only one who could overcome the world—to wit, the veritable hero, he who holds the purse-strings. St. Francis did not speak to these. “ Oh, ye miserable, helpless, and despairing; ye who find yourselves so unutterably forlorn—so very, very far astray; ye lost souls whom Satan has bound through the long weary years; ye of the broken hearts, bowed down and crushed; ye with your wasted bodies loathsome to every sense, to whom life is torture and whom death will not deliver; ye whose very nearness by the wayside makes the traveller as he passes shudder with uncontrollable horror lest your breath should light upon his garments, look! I am poor as you—I am one of yourselves. Christ, the very Christ of God, has sent me with a message to you. Listen!”

It is observable that we never hear of St. Francis that he was a sermon-maker. He had received no clerical or even academical training. Up to 1207 he had not even a license to preach. It was only after this that he was—and apparently without desiring it—ordained a deacon. In its first beginnings the Franciscan movement was essentially moral, not theological, still less intellectual. The absence of anything like dogma in the sermons of the early Mino-

rites was their characteristic. One is tempted to say it was a mere accident that these men were not sectaries, so little in common had they with the ecclesiastics of the time, so entirely did they live and labour among the laity of whom they were and with whom they so profoundly sympathized.

The secret of the overwhelming, the irresistible attraction which St. Francis exercised is to be found in his matchless simplicity, in his sublime self-surrender. He removed mountains because he believed intensely in the infinite power of *mere goodness*. While from the writhing millions all over Europe—the millions ignorant, neglected, plague-stricken, despairing—an inarticulate wail was going up to God, St. Francis made it articulate. Then he boldly proclaimed: “God has heard your cry! It meant this and that. I am sent to you with the good God’s answer.” There was less than a step between accepting him as the interpreter of their vague yearnings and embracing him as the ambassador of Heaven to themselves.

St. Francis was hardly twenty-eight years old when he set out for Rome, to lay himself at the feet of the great Pope Innocent the Third, and to ask from him some formal recognition. The pontiff, so the story goes, was walking in the garden of the



Lateran when the momentous meeting took place. Startled by the sudden apparition of an emaciated young man, bareheaded, shoeless, half-clad, but—for all his gentleness—a beggar who would take no denial, Innocent hesitated. It was but for a brief hour, the next he was won.

Francis returned to Assisi with the Papal sanction for what was, probably, a draught of his afterwards famous "Rule." He was met by the whole city, who received him with a frenzy of excitement. By this time his enthusiasm had kindled that of eleven other young men, all now aglow with the same divine fire. A twelfth soon was added—he, moreover, a layman of gentle blood and of knightly rank. All these had surrendered their claim to everything in the shape of property, and had resolved to follow their great leader's example by stripping themselves of all worldly possessions, and suffering the loss of all things. They were beggars—literally barefooted beggars. The love of money was the root of all evil. They would not touch the accursed thing lest they should be defiled—no, not with the tips of their fingers. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Beggars they were, but they were brethren—*Fratres* (*Frères*). We in England have got to call them *Friars*. Francis was never known in his life-

time as anything higher than *Brother Francis*, and his community he insisted should be called the community of the lesser brethren—*Fratres Minores*—for none could be or should be *less* than they. Abbots and Priors, he would have none of them. “He that will be chief among you,” he said, in Christ’s own words, “let him be your servant.” The highest official among the *Minorites* was the *Minister*, the elect of all, the servant of all, and if not humble enough to serve, not fit to rule.

People talk of “Monks and Friars” as if these were convertible terms. The truth is that the difference between the Monks and the Friars was almost one of kind. The Monk was supposed never to leave his cloister. The Friar in St. Francis’ first intention had no cloister to leave. Even when he had where to lay his head, his life-work was not to save his own soul, but first and foremost to save the bodies and souls of others. The Monk had nothing to do with ministering to others. At best his business was to be the salt of the earth, and it behoved him to be much more upon his guard that the salt should not lose his savour, than that the earth should be sweetened. The Friar was an itinerant evangelist, always on the move. He was a preacher of righteousness. He lifted up his voice against sin and wrong. “Save yourselves from this untoward generation!”

he cried; " save yourselves from the wrath to come." The Monk, as has been said, was an aristocrat. The Friar belonged to the great unwashed!

Without the loss of a day the new apostles of poverty, of pity, of an all-embracing love, went forth by two and two to build up the ruined Church of God. Theology they were, from anything that appears, sublimely ignorant of. Except that they were masters of every phrase and word in the Gospels, their stock in trade was scarcely more than that of an average candidate for Anglican orders; but to each and all of them Christ was simply *everything*. If ever men have preached Christ, these men did; Christ, nothing but Christ, the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. They had no system, they had no views, they combated no opinions, they took no side. Let the dialecticians dispute about this nice distinction or that. There *could* be no doubt that Christ had died and risen, and was alive for evermore. There was no place for controversy or opinions when here was a mere simple, indisputable, but most awful fact. Did you want to wrangle about the aspect of the fact, the evidence, the what not? St. Francis had no mission to argue with you. " The pearl of great price—will you have it or not? Whether or not, there are millions sighing for it, crying for it, dying for it. To the

poor at any rate the Gospel shall be preached now as of old."

To the poor by the poor. Those masses, those dreadful masses, crawling, sweltering in the foul hovels, in many a southern town, with never a roof to cover them, huddling in groups under a dry arch, alive with vermin; gibbering *crétins* with the ghastly wens; lepers by the hundred, too shocking for mothers to gaze at, and therefore driven forth to curse and howl in the lazar-house outside the walls, there stretching out their bony hands to clutch the frightened alms-giver's dole, or, failing that, to pick up shreds of offal from the heaps of garbage—to these St. Francis came.

More wonderful still!—to these outcasts came those other twelve, so utterly had their leader's sublime self-surrender communicated itself to his converts. "We are come," they said, "to live among you and be your servants, and wash your sores, and make your lot less hard than it is. We only want to do as Christ bids us do. We are beggars too, and we too have not where to lay our heads. Christ sent us to you. Yes. Christ the crucified, whose we are, and whose you are. Be not wroth with us, we will help you if we can."

As they spoke, so they lived. They *were* less than the least, as St. Francis told them they must

strive to be. Incredulous cynicism was put to silence. It was wonderful, it was inexplicable, it was disgusting, it was anything you please; but where there were outcasts, lepers, pariahs, there, there were these penniless Minorites tending the miserable sufferers with a cheerful look, and not seldom with a merry laugh. As one reads the stories of those earlier Franciscans, one is reminded every now and then of the extravagances of the Salvation Army.

The heroic example set by these men at first startled, and then fascinated the upper classes. While labouring to save the lowest, they took captive the highest. The Brotherhood grew in numbers day by day; as it grew, new problems presented themselves. How to dispose of all the wealth renounced, how to employ the energies of all the crowds of brethren. Hardest of all, what to do with the earnest, highly trained, and sometimes erudite convert who could not divest himself of the treasures of learning which he had amassed. "Must I part with my books?" said the scholar, with a sinking heart. "Carry nothing with you for your journey!" was the inexorable answer. "Not a Breviary? Not even the Psalms of David?" "Get them into your heart of hearts, and provide yourself with a treasure in the heavens. Who ever heard of Christ reading books, save when He opened the book in the synagogue,.

and *then closed it and went forth to teach the world for ever?*'

In 1215 the new Order held its first Chapter at the Church of the Portiuncula. The numbers of the Brotherhood and the area over which their labours extended had increased so vastly that it was already found necessary to nominate Provincial Ministers in France, Germany, and Spain.

While these things were going on in Italy, another notable reformer was vexing his righteous soul in Spain. St. Dominic was a very different man from the gentle and romantic young Italian. Of high birth, which among the haughty Castilians has always counted for a great deal, he had passed his boyhood among ecclesiastics and academics. He was twelve years older than St. Francis. He studied theology for ten years at the University of Palencia, and before the twelfth century closed he was an Augustinian Canon. In 1203, while St. Francis was still poring over his father's ledgers, Dominic was associated with the Bishop of Osma in negotiating a marriage for Alphonso the Eighth, king of Castille. For the next ten years he was more or less concerned with the hideous atrocities of the Albigenian War. During that dark period of his career he was brought every

day face to face with heresy and schism. From infancy he must have heard those around him talk with a savage intolerance of the Moors of the South and the stubborn Jews of Toledo nearer home. Now his eyes were open to the perils that beset the Church from sectaries who from within were for casting off her divine authority. Wretches who questioned the very creeds and rejected the Sacraments, yet perversely insisted that they were Christian men and women, with a clearer insight into Gospel mysteries than Bishops and Cardinals or the Holy Father himself. Here was heresy rampant, and immortal souls, all astray, beguiled by evil men and deceivers, "whose word doth eat as doth a canker." Dominic "saw that there was no man, and marvelled that there was no intercessor."

It was not ungodliness that Dominic, in the first instance, determined to war with, but ignorance and error. *These* were to him the monster evils, whose natural fruit was moral corruption. Get rid of them and the depraved heart might be dealt with by-and-by. Dominic stood forth as the determined champion of orthodoxy. "Preach the word in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort"—that was his panacea. His success at first was but small. Preachers with the divine fervour, with the gift of utterance, with the power to drive truth home—are rare.

They are not to be had for the asking; they are not to be trained in a day. Years passed, but little was achieved.

Dominic was patient. He had, indeed, founded a small religious community of sixteen brethren at St. Ronain, near Toulouse—one of these, we are told, was an Englishman—whose aim and object were to produce an effect through the agency of the pulpit, to confute the heretics and instruct the unlearned. The Order, if it deserved the name, was established on the old lines. A monastery was founded, a local habitation secured. The maintenance of the brotherhood was provided for by a sufficient endowment; the petty cares and anxieties of life were in the main guarded against; but when Innocent the Third gave his formal sanction to the new community, it was given to Dominic and his associates, on the 8th of October, 1215, as to a house of *Augustinian Canons*, who received permission to enjoy in their corporate capacity the endowments which had been bestowed upon them.

In the following July Innocent died, and was at once succeeded by Honorius the Third. Dominic set out for Rome, and on the 22nd of December he received from the new Pope a bare confirmation of what his predecessor had granted, with little more than a passing allusion to the fact that the new canons were



to be emphatically *Preachers* of the faith. In the autumn of 1217 Dominic turned his back upon Languedoc for ever. He took up his residence at Rome, and at once rose high in the favour of the Pope. His eloquence, his earnestness, his absorbing enthusiasm, his matchless dialectic skill, his perfect scholastic training—all combined to attract precisely those cultured churchmen whose fastidious sense of the fitness of things revolted from the austerities of St. Francis and the enormous demands which the Minorites made upon their converts. While Francis was acting upon the masses from Assisi, Dominic was stirring the dry bones to a new vitality among scholars and ecclesiastics at Rome.

Thus far we have heard little or nothing of poverty among the more highly educated *Friars Preachers*, as they got to be called. That seems to have been quite an afterthought. So far as Dominic may be said to have accepted the Voluntary Principle and, renouncing all endowments, to have thrown himself and his followers for support upon the alms of the faithful, so far he was a disciple of St. Francis. The Champion of Orthodoxy was a convert to the Apostle of Poverty.

How soon the Dominicans gave in their adhesion to the distinctive tenet of the Minorites will never

now be known, nor how far St. Francis himself adopted it from others; but a conviction that holiness of life had deteriorated in the Church and the cloister by reason of the excessive wealth of monks and ecclesiastics was prevalent everywhere, and a belief was growing that sanctity was attainable only by those who were ready to part with all their worldly possessions and give to such as needed. Even before St. Francis had applied to Innocent the Third, the poor men of Lyons had come to Rome begging for papal sanction to their missionary plans; they met with little favour, and vanished from the scene. But they too declaimed against endowments—they too were to live on alms. The Gospel of Poverty was “*in the air.*”

In 1219 the Franciscans held their second general Chapter. It was evident that they were taking the world by storm; evident, too, that their astonishing success was due less to their preaching than to their self-denying lives. It was abundantly plain that this vast army of fervent missionaries could live from day to day and work wonders in evangelizing the masses without owning a rood of land, or having anything to depend upon but the perennial stream of bounty which flowed from the gratitude of the converts. If the Preaching Friars were to succeed at such a time as this, they could only hope to do so by exhibiting as sublime a faith

as the Minorites displayed to the world. Accordingly, in the very year after the second Chapter of the Franciscans was held at Assisi, a general Chapter of the Dominicans was held at Bologna, and there the profession of poverty was formally adopted, and the renunciation of all means of support, except such as might be offered from day to day, was insisted on. Henceforth the two orders were to labour side by side in magnificent rivalry—mendicants who went forth like Gideon's host with empty pitchers to fight the battles of the Lord, and whose desires as far as the good things of this world went, were summed up in the simple petition, "Give us this day our daily bread!"

Thus far the Friars had scarcely been heard of in England. The Dominicans—trained men of education, addressing themselves mainly to the educated classes, and sure of being understood wherever Latin, the universal medium of communication among scholars, was in daily and hourly use—the Dominicans could have little or no difficulty in getting an audience such as they were qualified to address. It was otherwise with the Franciscans. If the world was to be divided between these two great bands, obviously the Minorites' sphere of labour must be mainly among

the lowest, that of the Preaching Friars among the cultured classes.

When the Minorites preached among Italians or Frenchmen they were received with tumultuous welcome. They spoke the language of the people; and in the vulgar speech of the people—rugged, plastic, and reckless of grammar—the message came as glad tidings of great joy. When they tried the same method in Germany, we are told, they signally failed. The gift of tongues, alas! had ceased. That, at any rate, was denied, even to such faith as theirs. They were met with ridicule. The rabble of Cologne or Bremen, hoarsely grumbling out their grating gutturals, were not to be moved by the most impassioned pleading of angels in human form, soft though their voices might be, and musical their tones “Ach Himmel! was sagt er?” growled one. And peradventure some well-meaning interpreter replied: “Zu suchen und selig zu machen.” When the Italian tried to repeat the words, his utterance, not his faith, collapsed! The German-speaking people must wait till a door should be opened. Must England wait too? Yes! For the Franciscan missionaries England too must wait a little while.

But England was exactly the land for the Dominican to turn to. Unhappy England! Dominic was born

in the same year that Thomas à Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral; Francis in the year before the judgment of the Most High began to fall upon the guilty king and his accursed progeny. Since then everything seemed to have gone wrong. The last six years of Henry the Second's reign were years of piteous misery, shame, and bitterness. His two elder sons died in arms against their father, the one childless, the other, Geoffrey, with a baby boy never destined to arrive at manhood. The two younger ones were Richard and John. History has no story more sad than that of the wretched king, hard at death's door, compelled to submit to the ferocious vindictiveness of the one son, and turning his face to the wall with a broken heart when he discovered the hateful treachery of the other. Ten years after this Richard died childless, and King John was crowned—the falsest, meanest, worst, and wickedest king that ever sat upon the throne of England. And now John himself was dead; and “Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child!” for Henry the Third was crowned, a boy just nine years old.

For eight years England had lain under the terrible interdict; for most of the time only a single bishop had remained in England. John had small need to tax the people: he lived upon the plunder of bishops and abbots. The churches were desolate; the

worship of God in large districts almost came to an end. Only in the Cistercian monasteries, and in them only for a time, and to a very limited extent, were the rites of religion continued. It is hardly conceivable that the places of those clergy who died during the eight years of the interdict were supplied by fresh ordinations; and some excuse may have been found for the outrageous demands of the Pope to present to English benefices in the fact that many cures must have been vacant, and the supply of qualified Englishmen to succeed them had fallen short.

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It was during the year after the Chapter of the Dominicans held at Bologna in 1220, that the first brethren of the Order arrived in England. They were under the direction of one Gilbert de Fraxineto, who was accompanied by twelve associates. They landed early in August, probably at Dover. They were at once received with cordiality by Archbishop Langton, who put their powers to the test by commanding one of their number to preach before him. The Primate took them into his favour, and sent them on their way. On the 10th of August they were preaching in London, and on the 15th they appeared in Oxford, and were welcomed as the bringers-in of

new things. Their success was unequivocal. We hardly hear of their arrival before we learn that they were well established in their school and surrounded by eager disciples.

The Dominicans had been settled in Oxford just two years when the first band of Franciscan brethren landed in England, on the 11th of September, 1224. They landed penniless; their passage over had been paid by the monks of Fécamp; they numbered in all nine persons, five were laymen, four were clerics. Of the latter three were Englishmen, the fourth was an Italian, Agnellus of Pisa by name. Agnellus had been some time previously destined by St. Francis as the first *Minister* for the province of England, not improbably because he had some familiarity with our language. He was about thirty years of age, and as yet only in deacon's orders. Indeed, of the whole company *only one was a priest*, a man of middle age who had made his mark and was famous as a preacher of rare gifts and deep earnestness. He was a Norfolk man born, Richard of Ingworth by name, and presumably a priest of the diocese of Norwich. Of the five laymen one was a Lombard, who may have had some kinsfolk and friends in London, where he was allowed as warden for some years, and one, Lawrence of Beauvais.

was a personal and intimate friend of St. Francis, who on his death-bed gave him the habit which he himself had worn.

The whole party were hospitably entertained for two days at the Priory of the Holy Trinity at Canterbury. Then Brother Richard Ingworth, with another Richard—a Devonshire youth conspicuous for his ascetic fervour and devotion, but only old enough to be admitted to minor orders—set out for London, accompanied by the Lombard and another foreigner, leaving behind him Agnellus and the rest, among them William of Esseby, the third Englishman, enthusiastic and ardent as the others, but a mere youth and as yet a novice. He, too, I conjecture to have been a Norfolk or Suffolk man, whose birth-place, *Ashby*, in the East Anglian dialect, would be pronounced nearly as it is written in Eccleston's manuscript. It was arranged that Richard Ingworth should lose no time in trying to secure some place where they might all lay their heads, and from whence as a centre they might begin the great work they had in hand. The Canterbury party were received into the Priest's House and allowed to remain for a while. Soon they received permission to sleep in a building used as a school during the day-time, and while the boys were being taught the poor friars huddled together in a small room adjoining, where they were



confined as if they had been prisoners. When the scholars went home the friars crept out, lit a fire and sat round it, boiled their porridge, and mixed their small beer, sour and thick as we are told it was, with water to make it go further, and each contributed some word of edification to the general stock, brought forward some homely illustration which might serve to brighten the next sermon when it should be preached, or told a pleasant tale, thought out during the day—a story with a moral. Of the five left behind at Canterbury it is to be observed that no one of them was qualified as yet to preach in the vernacular. William of Esseby was too young for the pulpit, though he became a very effective preacher in a few years. He was, however, doing good service as interpreter, and doubtless as teacher of English to the rest.

Before long the cheerfulness, self-denial, and devout bearing of the little company at Canterbury gained for them the warm support and friendship of all classes. They had a very hard time of it. Sometimes a kind soul would bring them actually a dish of meat, sometimes even a bottle of wine, but as a rule their fare was bread—made up into *twists*, we hear, when it was specially excellent—wheat-bread, wholesome and palatable; but, alas, sometimes barley-bread, washed down with beer too sour to drink undiluted with water. Alexander, the master of the

Priest's House at Canterbury, soon after gave them a piece of ground and built them a temporary chapel, but when he was for presenting them with the building, he was told that they might not possess houses and lands, and the property was thereupon made over to the corporation of Canterbury to hold in honourable trust for their use, the friars *borrowing* it of the town. Simon Langton too, Archdeacon of Canterbury, the primate's brother, stood their friend, and one or two people of influence among the laity, as Sir Henry de Sandwich, a wealthy Kentish gentleman, and a lady whom Eccleston calls a "noble countess," one Inclusa de Baginton, warmly supported them and liberally supplied their necessities. It is worthy of notice that at Canterbury their first friends were among the wealthy, *i.e.*, those among whom a command of English was not necessary.

While Agnellus and his brethren were waiting patiently at Canterbury, Ingworth and young Richard of Devon with the two Italians had made their way to London and had been received with enthusiasm. Their first entertainers were the Dominican friars who, though they had been only two years before them, yet had already got for themselves a house, in which they were able to entertain the new-comers for a fortnight. At the end of that time they hired a plot of ground in Cornhill of John Travers, the Sheriff

of London, and there they built for themselves a house, such as it was. Their cells were constructed like sheep-cotes, mere wattles with mouldy hay or straw between them. Their fare was of the meanest, but they gained in estimation every day. In their humble quarters at Cornhill they remained preaching, visiting, nursing, begging their bread, but always gay and busy, till the summer of 1225, when a certain John Iwyn—again a name suspiciously like the phonetic representative of the common Norfolk name of *Ewing*—a mercer and citizen, offered them a more spacious and comfortable dwelling in the parish of St. Nicholas. As their brethren at Canterbury had done, so did they; they refused all houses and lands, and the house was made over to the corporation of London for their use. Not long after the worthy citizen assumed the Franciscan habit and renounced the world, to embrace poverty.

In the autumn of 1225 Ingworth and the younger Richard left London, Agnellus taking their place. He had not been idle at Canterbury, and his success in making converts had been remarkable. At Canterbury and London the Minorites had secured for themselves a firm footing. The Universities were next invaded. The two Richards reached Oxford about October, 1225, and as before were received with great cordiality by the Dominicans, and hospitably enter-

tained for eight days. Before a week was out they had got the loan of a house or hall in the parish of St. Ebbs, and had started lectures and secured a large following. Here young Esseby joined them, sent on it seems by Agnellus from London to assist in the work; a year or so older than when he first landed, and having shown in that time unmistakable signs of great capacity and entire devotion to the work. Esseby was quite able to stand alone.

Once more the two Richards moved on to Northampton, where an "opening from the Lord" seemed to have presented itself. By this time the whole country was on the tip-toe of expectation and crowds of all classes had given in their adhesion to the new missionaries. No! it was *not* grandeur or riches or honour or learning that were wanted above all things—not these, but Goodness, Meekness, Simplicity, and Truth. The love of money *was* the root of all evil. The Minorites were right. When men with a divine fervour proclaim a truth, or even half a truth, which the world has forgotten, there is never any lack of enthusiasm in its acceptance. In five years from their first arrival the Friars had established themselves in almost every considerable town in England, and where one order settled the other came soon after, the two orders in their first beginning co-operating cordially. It was only when their faith

and zeal began to wax cold that jealousy broke forth into bitter antagonism.

In no part of England were the Franciscans received with more enthusiasm than in Norfolk. They appear to have established themselves at Lynn, Yarmouth, and Norwich in 1226. Clergy and laity, rich and poor, united in offering to them a ready homage. To this day a certain grudging provincialism is observable in the East Anglian character. A Norfolk man distrusts the settler from "the Shires," who comes in with new-fangled reforms. To this day the home of wisdom is supposed to be in the East. When it was understood that the virtual leader of this astonishing religious revival was a Norfolk man, the joy and pride of Norfolk knew no bounds. Nothing was too much to do for their own hero. But when it became known that Ingworth had been welcomed with open arms by Robert Grosseteste, the foremost scholar in Oxford—he a Suffolk man—and that Grosseteste's friend, Roger de Weseham, was their warm supporter, son of a Norfolk yeoman, whose brethren were to be seen any day in Lynn market—the ovation that the Franciscans met with was unparalleled. There was a general rush by some of the best men of the county into the Order.

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St. Francis died at Assisi, on October 4, 1226. With his death troubles began. Brother Elias, who was chosen to succeed him as Minister-General of the Order, had little of the great founder's spirit, and none of his genius. There was unseemly strife and rivalry, and on the Continent it would appear that the Minorites made but little way. Not so was it in England; there the supply of brethren animated by genuine enthusiasm and burning zeal for the cause they had espoused was unexampled. Perhaps there more than anywhere else such labourers were needed, perhaps too they had a fairer field. Certainly there they were truer to their first principles than elsewhere.

Outside the city walls at Lynn and York and Bristol; in a filthy swamp at Norwich, through which the drainage of the city sluggishly trickled into the river, never a foot lower than its banks; in a mere barn-like structure, with walls of mud, at Shrewsbury, in the " Stinking Alley " in London, the Minorites took up their abode, and there they lived on charity, doing for the lowest the most menial offices, speaking to the poorest words of hope, preaching to learned and simple such sermons—short, homely, fervent, and emotional—as the world had not heard for many a day. How could such evangelists fail to win their way? Before Henry III's reign was half over the

predominance of the Franciscans over Oxford was almost supreme. At Cambridge their influence was less dominant only because at Cambridge there was no commanding genius like Robert Grosseteste to favour and support them.

St. Francis' hatred of book-learning was the one sentiment that he never was able to inspire among his followers. Almost from the first scholars, students, and men of learning were attracted by the irresistible charm of his wonderful moral persuasiveness; they gave in their adherence to him in a vague hope that by contact with his surpassing holiness virtue would go out of him, and that somehow the divine goodness which he magnified as the one thing needful would be communicated to them and supply that which was lacking in themselves; but they could not bring themselves to believe that culture and holiness were incompatible or that nearness to God was possible only to those who were ignorant and uninstructed. We should have expected learning among the Dominicans, but very soon the English Franciscans became the most learned body in Europe, and that character they never lost till the suppression of the monasteries swept them out of the land. Before Edward I came to the throne, in less than fifty years after Richard Ingworth and his little band landed at Dover, Robert Kilwarby, a Franciscan friar, had been

chosen Archbishop of Canterbury, and Bonaventura, the General of the Order, had refused the Archbishopric of York. In 1281 Jerome of Ascoli, Bonaventura's successor as General, was elected Pope, assuming the name of Nicholas IV.

Meanwhile such giants as Alexander Hales and Roger Bacon and Duns Scotus among the Minorites—all Englishmen be it remembered—and Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus among the Dominicans, had given to intellectual life that amazing lift into a higher region of thought, speculation, and inquiry which prepared the way for greater things by-and-by. It was at Assisi that Cimabue and Giotto received their most sublime inspiration and did their very best, breathing the air that St. Francis himself had breathed and listening day by day to traditions and memories of the saint, told preadventure by one or another who had seen him alive or even touched his garments in their childhood. It may even be that there Dante watched Giotto at his work while the painter got the poet's face by heart.

To write the history of the Mendicant Orders in England would be a task beyond my capacity, but no man can hope to understand the successes or the failures of any great party in Church or State until



he has arrived at some comprehension, not only of the objects which it set itself to achieve, but of its *modus operandi* at the outset of its career.

The Friars were a great party in the Church, organised with a definite object, and pledged to carry out that object in simple reliance upon what we now call the *Voluntary Principle*. St. Francis saw, and saw much more clearly than even we of the nineteenth century see it, that the Parochial system is admirable, is a perfect system for the village, that it is unsuited for the town, that in the towns the attempt to work it had ended in a miserable and scandalous failure. The Friars came as helpers of the poor town clergy, just when those clergy had begun to give up their task as hopeless. They came as missionaries to those whom the town clergy had got to regard as mere *pariahs*. They came to strengthen the weak hands, and to labour in a new field.

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The Friars were the Evangelizers of the towns in England for 300 years. When the spoliation of the religious houses was decided upon, the Friars were the first upon whom the blow fell—the first and the last. But when their property came to be looked into, there was nothing to rob but the churches in which they worshipped, the libraries in which they studied,

and the houses in which they passed their lives. Rob the county hospitals to-morrow through the length and breadth of the land, or make a general scramble for the possessions of the Wesleyan body, and how many broad acres would go to the hammer?

Voluntaryism leaves little for the spoiler.

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The Rule of St. Francis was a glorious ideal; when it came to be carried into practice by creatures of flesh and blood, it proved to be something to dream of, not to live. And yet, even as it was, its effects upon the Church, nay, upon the whole civilized world, were enormous. If, one after another, the Mendicant Orders declined, if their zeal grew cold, their simplicity of life faded, and their discipline relaxed; if they became corrupted by that very world which they promised to purify and deliver from the dominion of Mammon—this is only what has happened again and again, what must happen as long as men are men. In every age the prophet has always asked for the unattainable, always pointed to a higher level than human nature could breathe in, always insisted on a measure of self-renunciation which saints in their prayers send forth the soul's lame hands to clutch—in their ecstasy of aspiration hope that they may some

day arrive at. But, alas! they reach it—never. And yet the saint and the prophet do not live in vain. They send a thrill of noble emotion through the heart of their generation, and the divine tremor does not soon subside; they gather round them the pure and generous—the lofty souls which are not all of the earth earthy. In such, at any rate, a fire is kindled by the spark that has fallen from the altar. By-and-by it is the fuel that fails; then the old fire, after smouldering for a while, goes out, and by no stirring of the dead embers can you make them flame again. You may cry as loudly as you will, “Pull down the chimney that will not draw, and set up another in its place!” That you may do if you please; another fire you may have, but the new will not be as the old.

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## ON SCIENCE AND ART IN RELATION TO EDUCATION \*

WHEN a man is honoured by such a request as that which reached me from the authorities of your institution some time ago, I think the first thing that occurs to him is that which occurred to those who were bidden to the feast in the Gospel—to begin to make an excuse; and probably all the excuses suggested on that famous occasion crop up in his mind one after the other, including his “having married a wife,” as reasons for not doing what he is asked to do. But, in my own case, and on this particular occasion, there were other difficulties of a sort peculiar to the time, and more or less personal to myself; because I felt that, if I came amongst you, I should be expected, and, indeed, morally compelled, to speak upon the subject of Scientific Education. And then there arose in my mind the recollection of a fact, which probably no one here but myself remembers; namely, that some fourteen years ago I was the guest of a citizen of yours, who bears the honoured name of Rathbone, at a very charming and

\* An Address to the members of the Liverpool Institution, 1882.

pleasant dinner given by the Philomathic Society; and I there and then, and in this very city, made a speech upon the topic of Scientific Education. Under these circumstances, you see, one runs two dangers—the first, of repeating one's self, although I may fairly hope that everybody has forgotten the fact I have just now mentioned, except myself; and the second, and even greater difficulty, is the danger of saying something different from what one said before, because then, however forgotten your previous speech may be, somebody finds out its existence, and there goes on that process so hateful to members of Parliament, which may be denoted by the term "Hansardisation." Under these circumstances, I came to the conclusion that the best thing I could do was to take the bull by the horns, and to "Hansardise" myself,—to put before you, in the briefest possible way, the three or four propositions which I endeavoured to support on the occasion of the speech to which I have referred; and then to ask myself, supposing you were asking me, whether I had anything to retract, or to modify, in them, in virtue of the increased experience, and, let us charitably hope, the increased wisdom of an added fourteen years.

Now, the points to which I directed particular attention on that occasion were these: in the first

place, that instruction in physical science supplies information of a character of especial value, both in a practical and a speculative point of view—information which cannot be obtained otherwise; and, in the second place, that, as educational discipline, it supplies, in a better form than any other study can supply, exercise in a special form of logic, and a peculiar method of testing the validity of our processes of inquiry. I said further, that, even at that time, a great and increasing attention was being paid to physical science in our schools and colleges, and that, most assuredly, such attention must go on growing and increasing, until education in these matters occupied a very much larger share of the time which is given to teaching and training, than had been the case heretofore. And I threw all the strength of argumentation of which I was possessed into the support of these propositions. But I venture to remind you, also, of some other words I used at that time, and which I ask permission to read to you. They were these:—"There are other forms of culture besides physical science, and I should be profoundly sorry to see the fact forgotten, or even to observe a tendency to starve or cripple literary or æsthetic culture for the sake of science. Such a narrow view of the nature of education has nothing to do with my firm conclusion that a complete and

thorough scientific culture ought to be introduced into all schools.''

I say I desire, in commenting upon these various points, and judging them as fairly as I can by the light of increased experience, to particularly emphasise this last, because I am told, although I assuredly do not know it of my own knowledge—though I think if the fact were so I ought to know it, being tolerably well acquainted with that which goes on in the scientific world, and which has gone on there for the last thirty years—that there is a kind of sect, or horde, of scientific Goths and Vandals, who think it would be proper and desirable to sweep away all other forms of culture and instruction, except those in physical science, and to make them the universal and exclusive, or, at any rate, the dominant training of the human mind of the future generation. This is not my view—I do not believe that it is anybody's view,—but it is attributed to those who, like myself, advocate scientific education. I therefore dwell strongly upon the point, and I beg you to believe that the words I have just now read were by no means intended by me as a sop to the Cerberus of culture. I have not been in the habit of offering sops to any kind of Cerberus; but it was an expression of profound conviction on my own part—a conviction forced upon me not only by

my mental constitution, but by the lessons of what is now becoming a somewhat long experience of varied conditions of life

I am not about to trouble you with my autobiography; the omens are hardly favourable, at present, for work of that kind. But I should like if I may do so without appearing, what I earnestly desire not to be, egotistical,—I should like to make it clear to you, that such notions as these, which are sometimes attributed to me, are, as I have said, inconsistent with my mental constitution, and still more inconsistent with the upshot of the teaching of my experience. For I can certainly claim for myself that sort of mental temperament which can say that nothing human comes amiss to it. I have never yet met with any branch of human knowledge which I have found unattractive—which it would not have been pleasant to me to follow, so far as I could go; and I have yet to meet with any form of art in which it has not been possible for me to take as acute a pleasure as, I believe, it is possible for men to take.

And with respect to the circumstances of life, it so happens that it has been my fate to know many lands and many climates, and to be familiar, by personal experience, with almost every form of society, from the uncivilised savage of Papua and Australia



and the civilised savages of the slums and dens of the poverty-stricken parts of great cities, to those who perhaps, are occasionally the somewhat over-civilised members of our upper ten thousand. And I have never found, in any of these conditions of life, a deficiency of something which was attractive. Savagery has its pleasures, I assure you, as well as civilisation, and I may even venture to confess—if you will not let a whisper of the matter get back to London, where I am known—I am even fain to confess, that sometimes in the din and throng of what is called “ a brilliant reception ” the vision crosses my mind of waking up from the soft plank which had afforded me satisfactory sleep during the hours of the night, in the bright dawn of a tropical morning, when my comrades were yet asleep, when every sound was hushed, except the little lap-lap of the ripples against the sides of the boat, and the distant twitter of the sea-bird on the reef. And when that vision crosses my mind, I am free to confess I desire to be back in the boat again. So that, if I share with those strange persons to whose asserted, but still hypothetical existence I have referred, the want of appreciation of forms of culture other than the pursuit of physical science, all I can say is, that it is, in spite of my constitution, and in spite of my experience, that such should be my fate.

But now let me turn to another point, or rather to two other points, with which I propose to occupy myself. How far does the experience of the last fourteen years justify the estimate which I ventured to put forward of the value of scientific culture, and of the share—the increasing share—which it must take in ordinary education? Happily, in respect to that matter, you need not rely upon my testimony. In the last half-dozen numbers of the “Journal of Education,” you will find a series of very interesting and remarkable papers, by gentlemen who are practically engaged in the business of education in our great public and other schools, telling us what is doing in these schools, and what is their experience of the results of scientific education there, so far as it has gone. I am not going to trouble you with an abstract of those papers, which are well worth your study in their fulness and completeness, but I have copied out one remarkable passage, because it seems to me so entirely to bear out what I have formerly ventured to say about the value of science, both as to its subject-matter and as to the discipline which the learning of science involves. It is from a paper by Mr. Worthington—one of the masters at Clifton, the reputation of which school you know well, and at the head of which is an old friend of mine, the Rev Mr. Wilson—to whom much credit is due for being

one of the first, as I can say from my own knowledge, to take up this question and work it into practical shape. What Mr. Worthington says is this:—

“ It is not easy to exaggerate the importance of the information imparted by certain branches of science; it modifies the whole criticism of life made in maturer years. The study has often, on a mass of boys, a certain influence which, I think, was hardly anticipated, and to which a good deal of value must be attached—an influence as much moral as intellectual, which is shown in the increased and increasing respect for precision of statement, and for that form of veracity which consists in the acknowledgment of difficulties. It produces a real effect to find that Nature cannot be imposed upon, and the attention given to experimental lectures, at first superficial and curious only, soon becomes minute, serious, and practical.”

Ladies and gentlemen, I could not have chosen better words to express—in fact, I have, in other words, expressed the same conviction in former days—what the influence of scientific teaching, if properly carried out, must be.

But now comes the question of properly carrying it out, because, when I hear the value of school teaching in physical science disputed, my first impulse is to ask the disputer, “ What have you known

about it?" and he generally tells me some lamentable case of failure. Then I ask, "What are the circumstances of the case, and how was the teaching carried out?" I remember, some few years ago, hearing of the head-master of a large school, who had expressed great dissatisfaction with the adoption of the teaching of physical science—and that after experiment. But the experiment consisted in this—in asking one of the junior masters in the school to get up science, in order to teach it; and the young gentleman went away for a year and got up science and taught it. Well, I have no doubt that the result was as disappointing as the head-master said it was, and I have no doubt that it ought to have been as disappointing, and far more disappointing too; for, if this kind of instruction is to be of any good at all, if it is not to be less than no good, if it is to take the place of that which is already of some good, then there are several points which must be attended to.

And the first of these is the proper selection of topics, the second is practical teaching, the third is practical teachers, and the fourth is sufficiency of time. If these four points are not carefully attended to by anybody who undertakes the teaching of physical science in schools, my advice to him is, to let it alone. I will not dwell at any length upon the first point, because there is a general consensus of opinion

as to the nature of the topics which should be chosen. The second point—practical teaching—is one of great importance, because it requires more capital to set it agoing, demands more time, and, last, but by no means least, it requires much more personal exertion and trouble on the part of those professing to teach, than is the case with other kinds of instruction.

When I accepted the invitation to be here this evening, your secretary was good enough to send me the addresses which have been given by distinguished persons who have previously occupied this chair. I don't know whether he had a malicious desire to alarm me; but, however that may be, I read the addresses, and derived the greatest pleasure and profit from some of them, and from none more than from the one given by the great historian, Mr. Freeman, which delighted me most of all; and, if I had not been ashamed of plagiarising, and if I had not been sure of being found out, I should have been glad to have copied very much of what Mr. Freeman said, simply putting in the word science for history. There was one notable passage,—“The difference between good and bad teaching mainly consists in this, whether the words used are really clothed with a meaning or not.” And Mr. Freeman gives a remarkable example of this. He says, when a little girl was asked where Turkey was, she answered that it was in the yard with the

other fowls, and that showed she had a definite idea connected with the word Turkey, and was, so far, worthy of praise. I quite agree with that commendation; but what a curious thing it is that one should now find it necessary to urge that this is the be-all and end-all of scientific instruction—the *sine qua non*, the absolutely necessary condition,—and yet that it was insisted upon more than two hundred years ago by one of the greatest men science ever possessed in this country, William Harvey. Harvey wrote, or at least published, only two small books, one of which is the well-known treatise on the circulation of the blood. The other, the “*Exercitationes de Generatione*,” is less known, but not less remarkable. And not the least valuable part of it is the preface, in which there occurs this passage: “Those who, reading the words of authors, do not form sensible images of the things referred to, obtain no true ideas, but conceive false imaginations and mere phantasms.” You see, William Harvey’s words are just the same in substance as those of Mr. Freeman, only they happen to be rather more than two centuries older. So that what I am now saying has its application elsewhere than in science; but assuredly in science the condition of knowing, of your own knowledge, things which you talk about, is absolutely imperative.

I remember, in my youth, there were detestable books which ought to have been burned by the hands of the common hangman, for they contained questions and answers to be learned by heart, of this sort, "What is a horse? The horse is termed *Equus caballus*; 'belongs to the class Mammalia; order, Pachydermata; family, Solidungula.'" Was any human being wiser for learning that magic formula? Was he not more foolish, inasmuch as he was deluded into taking words for knowledge? It is that kind of teaching that one wants to get rid of, and banished out of science. Make it as little as you like, but, unless that which is taught is based on actual observation and familiarity with facts, it is better left alone.

There are a great many people who imagine that elementary teaching might be properly carried out by teachers provided with only elementary knowledge. Let me assure you that that is the profoundest mistake in the world. There is nothing so difficult to do as to write a good elementary book, and there is nobody so hard to teach properly and well as people who know nothing about a subject, and I will tell you why. If I address an audience of persons who are occupied in the same line of work as myself, I can assume that they know a vast deal, and that they can find out the blunders I make. If they

don't, it is their fault and not mine; but when I appear before a body of people who know nothing about the matter, who take for gospel whatever I say, surely it becomes needful that I consider what I say, make sure that it will bear examination, and that I do not impose upon the credulity of those who have faith in me. In the second place, it involves that difficult process of knowing what you know so well that you can talk about it as you can talk about your ordinary business. A man can always talk about his own business. He can always make it plain; but, if his knowledge is hearsay, he is afraid to go beyond what he has recollected, and put it before those that are ignorant in such a shape that they shall comprehend it. That is why, to be a good elementary teacher, to teach the elements of any subject, requires most careful consideration, if you are a master of the subject; and, if you are not a master of it, it is needful you should familiarise yourself with so much as you are called upon to teach—soak yourself in it, so to speak—until you know it as part of your daily life and daily knowledge, and then you will be able to teach anybody. That is what I mean by practical teachers, and, although the deficiency of such teachers is being remedied to a large extent, I think it is one which has long existed, and which has existed from no fault of those who



undertook to teach, but because, until the last score of years, it absolutely was not possible for any one in a great many branches of science, whatever his desire might be, to get instruction which would enable him to be a good teacher of elementary things. All that is being rapidly altered, and I hope it will soon become a thing of the past.

The last point I have referred to is the question of the sufficiency of time. And here comes the rub. The teaching of science needs time, as any other subject; but it needs more time proportionally than other subjects, for the amount of work obviously done, if the teaching is to be, as I have said, practical. Work done in a laboratory involves a good deal of expenditure of time without always an obvious result, because we do not see anything of that quiet process of soaking the facts into the mind, which takes place through the organs of the senses. On this ground there must be ample time given to science teaching. What that amount of time should be is a point which I need not discuss now; in fact, it is a point which cannot be settled until one has made up one's mind about various other questions.

All, then, that I have to ask for, on behalf of the scientific people, if I may venture to speak for more than myself, is that you should put scientific teaching into what statesmen call the condition of

“ the most favoured nation;” that is to say, that it shall have as large a share of the time given to education as any other principal subject. You may say that that is a very vague statement, because the value of the allotment of time, under those circumstances, depends upon the number of principal subjects. It is  $x$  the time, and an unknown quantity of principal subjects dividing that, and science taking shares with the rest. That shows that we cannot deal with this question fully until we have made up our minds as to what the principal subjects of education ought to be.

I know quite well that launching myself into this discussion is a very dangerous operation; that it is a very large subject, and one which is difficult to deal with, however much I may trespass upon your patience in the time allotted to me. But the discussion is so fundamental, it is so completely impossible to make up one's mind on these matters until one has settled the question, that I will even venture to make the experiment. A great lawyer-statesman and philosopher of a former age—I mean Francis Bacon—said that truth came out of error much more rapidly than it came out of confusion. There is a wonderful truth in that saying. Next to being right in this world, the best of all things is to be clearly and definitely wrong, because you will

come out somewhere. If you go buzzing about between right and wrong, vibrating and fluctuating, you come out nowhere; but if you are absolutely and thoroughly and persistently wrong, you must, some of these days, have the extreme good fortune of knocking your head against a fact, and that sets you all straight again. So I will not trouble myself as to whether I may be right or wrong in what I am about to say, but at any rate I hope to be clear and definite; and then you will be able to judge for yourselves whether, in following out the train of thought I have to introduce, you knock your heads against facts or not.

I take it that the whole object of education is, in the first place, to train the faculties of the young in such a manner as to give their possessors the best chance of being happy and useful in their generation; and, in the second place, to furnish them with the most important portions of that immense capitalised experience of the human race which we call knowledge of various kinds. I am using the term knowledge in its widest possible sense; and the question is, what subjects to select by training and discipline, in which the object I have just defined may be best attained.

I must call your attention further to this fact, that all the subjects of our thoughts—all feelings

and propositions (leaving aside our sensations as the mere materials and occasions of thinking and feeling), all our mental furniture—may be classified under one of two heads—as either within the province of the intellect, something that can be put into propositions and affirmed or denied; or as within the province of feeling, or that which, before the name was defiled, was called the æsthetic side of our nature, and which can neither be proved nor disproved, but only felt and known.

According to the classification which I have put before you, then, the subjects of all knowledge are divisible into the two groups, matters of science and matters of art; for all things with which the reasoning faculty alone is occupied, come under the province of science; and in the broadest sense, and not in the narrow and technical sense in which we are now accustomed to use the word art, all things feelable, all things which stir our emotions, come under the term of art, in the sense of the subject-matter of the æsthetic faculty. So that we are shut up to this—that the business of education is, in the first place, to provide the young with the means and the habit of observation; and, secondly, to supply the subject-matter of knowledge either in the shape of science or of art, or of both combined.

Now, it is a very remarkable fact—but it is true

of most things in this world—that there is hardly anything one-sided, or of one nature; and it is not immediately obvious what of the things that interest us may be regarded as pure science, and what may be regarded as pure art. It may be that there are some peculiarly constituted persons who, before they have advanced far into the depths of geometry, find artistic beauty about it; but, taking the generality of mankind, I think it may be said that, when they begin to learn mathematics, their whole souls are absorbed in tracing the connection between the premisses and the conclusion, and that to them geometry is pure science. So I think it may be said that mechanics and osteology are pure science. On the other hand, melody in music is pure art. You cannot reason about it; there is no proposition involved in it. So, again, in the pictorial art, an arabesque, or a “harmony in grey,” touches none but the æsthetic faculty. But a great mathematician, and even many persons who are not great mathematicians, will tell you that they derive immense pleasure from geometrical reasonings. Everybody knows mathematicians speak of solutions and problems as “elegant,” and they tell you that a certain mass of mystic symbols is “beautiful, quite lovely.” Well, you do not see it. They do see it, because the intellectual process, the process of comprehending the

reasons symbolised by these figures and these signs, confers upon them a sort of pleasure, such as an artist has in visual symmetry. Take a science of which I may speak with more confidence, and which is the most attractive of those I am concerned with. It is what we call morphology, which consists in tracing out the unity in variety of the infinitely diversified structures of animals and plants. I cannot give you any example of a thorough æsthetic pleasure more intensely real than a pleasure of this kind—the pleasure which arises in one's mind when a whole mass of different structures run into one harmony as the expression of a central law. That is where the province of art overlays and embraces the province of intellect. And, if I may venture to express an opinion on such a subject, the great majority of forms of art are not in the sense what I just now defined them to be—pure art; but they derive much of their quality from simultaneous and even unconscious excitement of the intellect.

When I was a boy, I was very fond of music, and I am so now; and it so happened that I had the opportunity of hearing much good music. Among other things, I had abundant opportunities of hearing that great old master, Sebastian Bach. I remember perfectly well—though I knew nothing about music then, and, I may add, know nothing whatever

about it now—the intense satisfaction and delight which I had in listening, by the hour together, to Bach's fugues. It is a pleasure which remains with me, I am glad to think; but, of late years, I have tried to find out the why and wherefore, and it has often occurred to me that the pleasure derived from musical compositions of this kind is essentially of the same nature as that which is derived from pursuits which are commonly regarded as purely intellectual. I mean, that the source of pleasure is exactly the same as in most of my problems in morphology—that you have the theme in one of the old master's works followed out in all its endless variations, always appearing and always reminding you of unity in variety. So in painting; what is called "truth to nature" is the intellectual element coming in, and truth to nature depends entirely upon the intellectual culture of the person to whom art is addressed. If you are in Australia, you may get credit for being a good artist—I mean among the natives—if you can draw a kangaroo after a fashion. But, among men of higher civilisation, the intellectual knowledge we possess brings its criticism into our appreciation of works of art, and we are obliged to satisfy it, as well as the mere sense of beauty in colour and in outline. And so, the higher the culture and information of those whom art addresses, the more exact and

precise must be what we call its "truth to nature."

If we turn to literature, the same thing is true, and you find works of literature which may be said to be pure art. A little song of Shakespeare or of Goethe is pure art; it is exquisitely beautiful, although its intellectual content may be nothing. A series of pictures is made to pass before your mind by the meaning of words, and the effect is a melody of ideas. Nevertheless, the great mass of the literature we esteem is valued, not merely because of having artistic form, but because of its intellectual content; and the value is the higher the more precise, distinct, and true is that intellectual content. And, if you will let me for a moment speak of the very highest forms of literature, do we not regard them as highest simply because the more we know the truer they seem, and the more competent we are to appreciate beauty the more beautiful they are? No man ever understands Shakespeare until he is old, though the youngest may admire him, the reason being that he satisfies the artistic instinct of the youngest and harmonises with the ripest and richest experience of the oldest.

I have said this much to draw your attention to what, to my mind, lies at the root of all this matter, and at the understanding of one another by the men of science on the one hand, and the men of literature, and history, and art, on the other. It is not a ques-



tion whether one order of study or another should predominate. It is a question of what topics of education you shall select which will combine all the needful elements in such due proportion as to give the greatest amount of food, support, and encouragement to those faculties which enable us to appreciate truth, and to profit by those sources of innocent happiness which are open to us, and, at the same time, to avoid that which is bad, and coarse, and ugly, and keep clear of the multitude of pitfalls and dangers which beset those who break through the natural or moral laws.

I address myself, in this spirit, to the consideration of the question of the value of purely literary education. Is it good and sufficient, or is it insufficient and bad? Well, here I venture to say that there are literary educations and literary educations. If I am to understand by that term the education that was current in the great majority of middle-class schools, and upper schools too, in this country when I was a boy, and which consisted absolutely and almost entirely in keeping boys for eight or ten years at learning the rules of Latin and Greek grammar, construing certain Latin and Greek authors, and possibly making verses which, had they been English verses, would have been condemned as abominable doggerel,—if that is what you mean by liberal educa-

tion, then I say it is scandalously insufficient and almost worthless. My reason for saying so is not from the point of view of science at all, but from the point of view of literature. I say the thing professes to be literary education that is not a literary education at all. It was not literature at all that was taught, but science in a very bad form. It is quite obvious that grammar is science and not literature. The analysis of a text by the help of the rules of grammar is just as much a scientific operation as the analysis of a chemical compound by the help of the rules of chemical analysis. There is nothing that appeals to the æsthetic faculty in that operation; and I ask multitudes of men of my own age, who went through this process, whether they ever had a conception of art or literature until they obtained it for themselves after leaving school? Then you may say, "If that is so, if the education was scientific, why cannot you be satisfied with it?" I say, because although it is a scientific training, it is of the most inadequate and inappropriate kind. If there is any good at all in scientific education it is that men should be trained, as I said before, to know things for themselves at first hand, and that they should understand every step of the reason of that which they do.

I desire to speak with the utmost respect of that science—philology—of which grammar is a part and

parcel; yet everybody knows that grammar, as it is usually learned at school, affords no scientific training. It is taught just as you would teach the rules of chess or draughts. On the other hand, if I am to understand by a literary education the study of the literatures of either ancient or modern nations—but especially those of antiquity, and especially that of ancient Greece; if this literature is studied, not merely from the point of view of philological science, and its practical application to the interpretation of texts, but as an exemplification of and commentary upon the principles of art; if you look upon the literature of a people as a chapter in the development of the human mind, if you work out this in a broad spirit, and with such collateral references to morals and politics, and physical geography, and the like as are needful to make you comprehend what the meaning of ancient literature and civilisation is,—then, assuredly, it affords a splendid and noble education. But I still think it is susceptible of improvement, and that no man will ever comprehend the real secret of the difference between the ancient world and our present time, unless he has learned to see the difference which the late development of physical science has made between the thought of this day and the thought of that, and he will never see that difference, unless he has some practical insight into some branches of

physical science; and you must remember that a literary education such as that which I have just referred to, is out of the reach of those whose school life is cut short at sixteen or seventeen.

But, you will say, all this is fault-finding; let us hear what you have in the way of positive suggestion. Then I am bound to tell you that, if I could make a clean sweep of everything—I am very glad I cannot because I might, and probably should, make mistakes,—but if I could make a clean sweep of everything and start afresh, I should, in the first place, secure that training of the young in reading and writing, and in the habit of attention and observation, both to that which is told them, and that which they see, which everybody agrees to. But in addition to that, I should make it absolutely necessary for everybody, for a longer or shorter period, to learn to draw. Now, you may say, there are some people who cannot draw, however much they may be taught. I deny that *in toto*, because I never yet met with anybody who could not learn to write. Writing is a form of drawing; therefore if you give the same attention and trouble to drawing as you do to writing, depend upon it, there is nobody who cannot be made to draw, more or less well. Do not misapprehend me. I do not say for one moment you would make an artistic draughtsman. Artists are not made; they

grow. You may improve the natural faculty in that direction, but you cannot make it; but you can teach simple drawing, and you will find it an implement of learning of extreme value. I do not think its value can be exaggerated, because it gives you the means of training the young in attention and accuracy, which are the two things in which all mankind are more deficient than in any other mental quality whatever. The whole of my life has been spent in trying to give my proper attention to things and to be accurate, and I have not succeeded as well as I could wish; and other people, I am afraid, are not much more fortunate. You cannot begin this habit too early, and I consider there is nothing of so great a value as the habit of drawing, to secure those two desirable ends.

Then we come to the subject-matter, whether scientific or æsthetic, of education, and I should naturally have no question at all about teaching the elements of physical science of the kind I have sketched, in a practical manner; but among scientific topics, using the word scientific in the broadest sense, I would also include the elements of the theory of morals and of that of political and social life, which, strangely enough, it never seems to occur to anybody to teach a child. I would have the history of our own country, and of all the influences which have been brought to bear upon it, with incidental geography,

not as a mere chronicle of reigns and battles, but as a chapter in the development of the race, and the history of civilisation.

Then with respect to æsthetic knowledge and discipline, we have happily in the English language one of the most magnificent storehouses of artistic beauty and of models of literary excellence which exists in the world at the present time. I have said before, and I repeat it here, that if a man cannot get literary culture of the highest kind out of his Bible, and Chaucer, and Shakespeare, and Milton, and Hobbes, and Bishop Berkeley, to mention only a few of our illustrious writers—I say, if he cannot get it out of those writers, he cannot get it out of anything; and I would assuredly devote a very large portion of the time of every English child to the careful study of the models of English writing of such varied and wonderful kind as we possess, and, what is still more important and still more neglected, the habit of using that language with precision, with force, and with art. I fancy we are almost the only nation in the world who seem to think that composition comes by nature. The French attend to their own language, the Germans study theirs; but Englishmen do not seem to think it is worth their while. Nor would I fail to include, in the course of study I am sketching, translations of all the best works of anti-

quity, or of the modern world. It is a very desirable thing to read Homer in Græek; but if you don't happen to know Greek, the next best thing we can do is to read as good a translation of it as we have recently been furnished with in prose. You won't get all you would get from the original, but you may get a great deal; and to refuse to know this great deal because you cannot get all, seems to be as sensible as for a hungry man to refuse bread because he cannot get partridge. Finally, I would add instruction in either music or painting, or, if the child should be so unhappy, as sometimes happens, as to have no faculty for either of those, and no possibility of doing anything in any artistic sense with them, then I would see what could be done with literature alone; but I would provide, in the fullest sense, for the development of the æsthetic side of the mind. In my judgment, those are all the essentials of education for an English child. With that outfit, such as it might be made in the time given to education which is within the reach of nine-tenths of the population—with that outfit, an Englishman, within the limits of English life, is fitted to go anywhere, to occupy the highest positions, to fill the highest offices of the State, and to become distinguished in practical pursuits, in science, or in art. For, if he have the opportunity to learn all those things, and have his mind disciplined

in the various directions the teaching of those topics would have necessitated, then, assuredly, he will be able to pick up, on his road through life, all the rest of the intellectual baggage he wants.

If the educational time at our disposition were sufficient, there are one or two things I would add to those I have just now called the essentials; and perhaps you will be surprised to hear, though I hope you will not, that I should add, not more science, but one, or, if possible, two languages. The knowledge of some other language than one's own is, in fact, of singular intellectual value. Many of the faults and mistakes of the ancient philosophers are traceable to the fact that they knew no language but their own, and were often led into confusing the symbol with the thought which it embodied. I think it is Locke who says that one-half of the mistakes of philosophers have arisen from questions about words; and one of the safest ways of delivering yourself from the bondage of words is, to know how ideas look in words to which you are not accustomed. That is one reason for the study of language; another reason is, that it opens new fields in art and in science. Another is the practical value of such knowledge; and yet another is this, that if your languages are properly chosen, from the time of learning the additional languages you will know your own language



better than ever you did. So, I say, if the time given to education permits, add Latin and German. Latin, because it is the key to nearly one-half of English and to all the Romance languages; and German, because it is the key to almost all the remainder of English, and helps you to understand a race from whom most of us have sprung, and who have a character and a literature of a fateful force in the history of the world, such as probably has been allotted to those of no other people, except the Jews, the Greeks, and ourselves. Beyond these, the essential and the eminently desirable elements of all education, let each man take up his special line—the historian devote himself to his history, the man of science to his science, the man of letters to his culture of that kind, and the artist to his special pursuit.

Bacon has prefaced some of his works with no more than this: *Franciscus Bacon sic cogitavit*; let “ sic cogitavi ” be the epilogue to what I have ventured to address to you to-night.

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## THE USE OF HISTORY

WHAT is the use of historical knowledge? Is an acquaintance with the events, the men, the ideas of the past, of any real use to us in these days—has it any practical bearing upon happiness and conduct in life?

Two very different answers may be given to this question. The Gradgrinds and the Jack Cades assure us that there is no use at all. We are, they would say with Bacon, the mature age of the world; with us lies the gathered wisdom of ages. To waste our time in studying exploded fallacies, in reproducing worn-out forms of society, or in recalling men who were only conspicuous because they lived amidst a crowd of ignorant or benighted barbarians, is to wander from the path of progress, and to injure and not to improve our understandings.

On the other hand, the commonplace of literary gossip declares that history has fifty different uses. It is amusing to hear what curious things they did in bygone times. Then, again, it is very instructive as a study of character; we see in history the working of the human mind and will. Besides, it is necessary

to avoid the blunders they committed in past days: there we collect a store of moral examples, and of political maxims; we learn to watch the signs of the times, and to be prepared for situations whenever they return. And it cannot be doubted, they add, that it is a branch of knowledge, and all knowledge is good. To know history, they conclude, is to be well-informed, is to be familiar with some of the finest examples of elegant and brilliant writing.

Between the two, those who tell us plainly that history is of no use, and those who tell us vaguely that history is of fifty uses, there is not much to choose. We must thoroughly disagree with them both, and of the two we would rather deal with the former. Their opposition, at any rate, is concentrated into a single point, and may be met by a single and a direct answer. To them we may say, Are you consistent? Do you not in practice follow another course? In rejecting all connection with the facts and ideas of the past, are you not cutting the ground from under your own feet? Assume that you are an active politician and a staunch friend of the conservative or liberal party. What are the traditional principles of a party but a fraction, small, no doubt, but a sensible fraction, of history? You believe in the cause of progress. Yet what is the cause of progress but the extension of that civilisation, of

that change for the better which we have all witnessed or have learned to recognise as an established fact? Your voice, if you are a politician and a democrat, is on the side of freedom. Well, but do you never appeal to Magna Charta, to the Bill of Rights, to the Reform Acts, to American Independence, or the French Revolution? Or you are an imperialist, and you will suffer no outrage on the good name of England. You are ready to cover the seas with armaments to uphold the national greatness. But what is the high name of England if it is not the memory of all the deeds by which in peace or war, on sea or land, England has held her own amongst the foremost of the earth?

Nor is it true that we show no honour to the men of the past, are not guided by their ideas, and do not dwell upon their lives, their work, and their characters. The most turbulent revolutionary that ever lived, the most bitter hater of the past, finds many to admire. It may be Cromwell, it may be Rousseau, or Voltaire, it may be Robert Owen, but some such leader each will have; his memory he will revere, his influence he will admit, his principles he will contend for. Thus it will be in every sphere of active life. No serious politician can fail to recognise that, however strongly he repudiates antiquity, and rebels against the tyranny of custom, still he

himself only acts freely and consistently when he is following the path trodden by earlier leaders, and is working with the current of the principles in which he throws himself, and in which he has confidence. For him, then, it is not true that he rejects all common purpose with what has gone before. It is a question only of selection and of degree. To some he clings, the rest he rejects. Some history he does study, and finds in it both profit and enjoyment.

Suppose such a man to be interested in any study whatever, either in promoting general education, or eager to acquire knowledge for himself. He will find, at every step he takes, that he is appealing to the authority of the past, is using the ideas of former ages, and carrying out principles established by ancient, but not forgotten thinkers. If he studies geometry he will find that the first text-book put into his hand was written by a Greek two thousand years ago. If he takes up a grammar, he will be only repeating rules taught by Roman schoolmasters and professors. Or is he interested in art? He will find the same thing in a far greater degree. He goes to the British Museum, and he walks into a building which is a good imitation of a Greek temple. He goes to the Houses of Parliament to hear a debate, and he enters a building which is a bad imitation of a mediaeval town-hall.

Or, again, we know that he reads his Shakespeare and Milton; feels respect for the opinions of Bacon or of Hume, or Adam Smith. Such a man, the moment he takes a warm interest in anything—in politics, in education, in science, in art, or in social improvement—the moment that his intelligence is kindled, and his mind begins to work—that moment he is striving to throw himself into the stream of some previous human efforts, to identify himself with others, and to try to understand and to follow the path of future progress which has been traced out for him by the leaders of his own party or school. Therefore, such a man is not consistent when he says that history is of no use to him. He does direct his action by what he believes to be the course laid out before him; he does follow the guidance of certain teachers whom he respects.

We have then only to ask him on what grounds he rests his selection; why he chooses some and rejects all others; how he knows for certain that no other corner of the great field of history will reward the care of the ploughman, or bring forth good seed. In spite of himself, he will find himself surrounded in every act and thought of life by a power which is too strong for him. If he chooses simply to stagnate, he may, perhaps, dispense with any actual reference to the past; but the moment he begins to act, to live,

or to think, he must use the materials presented to him, and, so far as he is a member of a civilised community, so far as he is an Englishman, so far as he is a rational man, he can as little free himself from the influence of former generations as he can free himself from his personal identity; unlearn all that he has learnt; cease to be what his previous life has made him, and blot out of his memory all recollection whatever.

Let us suppose for a moment that any set of men could succeed in sweeping away from them all the influences of past ages, and everything that they had not themselves discovered or produced. Suppose that all knowledge of the gradual steps of civilisation, of the slow process of perfecting the arts of life and the natural sciences, were blotted out; suppose all memory of the efforts and struggles of earlier generations, and of the deeds of great men, were gone; all the landmarks of history; all that has distinguished each country, race, or city in past times from others; all notion of what man had done, or could do; of his many failures, of his successes, of his hopes; suppose for a moment all the books, all the traditions, all the buildings of past ages to vanish off the face of the earth, and with them the institutions of society, all political forms, all principles of politics, all systems of thought, all daily customs, all familiar arts;

suppose the most deep-rooted and most sacred of all our institutions gone; suppose that the family and home, property, and justice were strange ideas without meaning; that all the customs which surround us each from birth to death were blotted out; suppose a race of men whose minds, by a paralytic stroke of fate, had suddenly been deadened to every recollection, to whom the whole world was new,—can we imagine a condition of such utter helplessness, confusion, and misery?

Such a race might retain their old powers of mind, and of activity, nay, both might be increased tenfold, and yet it would not profit them. Can we conceive such a race acting together, living together, for one hour? They would have everything to create. Would any two agree to adopt the same custom, and could they live without any? They would have all the arts, all the sciences to reconstruct anew; and even their tenfold intellect would not help them there. With minds of the highest order it would be impossible to think, for the world would present one vast chaos; even with the most amazing powers of activity, they would fall back exhausted from the task of reconstructing, reproducing everything around them. Had they the wisest teachers or the highest social or moral purposes, they would all be lost and wasted in an interminable strife, and continual difference;



for family, town, property, society, country, nay, language itself, would be things which each would be left to create for himself, and each would create in a different manner. It would realise, indeed, the old fable of the tower of Babel; and the pride of self would culminate in confusion and dispersion. A race with ten times the intellect, twenty times the powers, and fifty times the virtues of any race that ever lived on earth would end, within a generation, in a state of hopeless barbarism; the earth would return to the days of primeval forests and swamps, and man descend amost to the level of the monkey and the beaver.

Now, if this be true, if we are so deeply indebted and so indissolubly bound to preceding ages, if all our hopes of the future depend on a sound understanding of the past, we cannot fancy any knowledge more important than the knowledge of the way in which this civilisation has been built up. If the destiny of our race, and the daily action of each of us, are so completely directed by it, the useful existence of each depends much upon a right estimate of that which has so constant an influence over him; will be advanced as he works with the working of that civilisation, above him, and around him; will be checked as he opposes it; it depends upon this, that he mistakes none of the elements that go to make

up that civilisation as a whole, and sees them in their due relation and harmony.

This brings us to that second class of objectors; those who, far from denying the interest of the events of the past, far from seeing no use at all in their study, are only too ready in discovering a multitude of reasons for it, and at seeing in it a variety of incongruous purposes. If they suppose that it furnishes us with parallels when similar events occur, the answer is, that similar events never do and never can occur in history. The history of man offers one unbroken chain of constant change, in which no single situation is ever reproduced. The story of the world is played out like a drama in many acts and scenes, not like successive games of chess, in which the pieces meet, combat, and manœuvre for a time, and then the board is cleared for another trial, and they are replaced in their original positions. Political maxims drawn crudely from history may do more harm than good. You may justify anything by a pointed example in history. It will show you instances of triumphant tyranny and triumphant tyrannicide. You may find in it excuses for any act or any system. What is true of one country is wholly untrue of another. What led to a certain result in one age, leads to a wholly opposite result in another.

Then as to character, if the sole object of studying history is to see in it the workings of the human heart, that is far better studied in the fictitious creations of the great masters of character—in Shakespeare, in Molière, in Fielding, and Scott. Macbeth and Richard are as true to nature as any name in history, and give us an impression of desperate ambition more vivid than the tale of any despot in ancient or modern times. Besides, if we read history only to find in it picturesque incident or subtle shades of character, we run as much chance of stumbling on the worthless and the curious as the noble and the great. A Hamlet is a study in interest perhaps exceeding all others in fiction or in fact, but we shall hardly find that Hamlets have stamped their trace very deep in the history of mankind. There are few lives in all human story more romantic than that of Alcibiades, and none more base. Some minds find fascination in the Popish plots of Titus Oates, where the interest centres round a dastardly ruffian. And the bullies, the fops, the cut-throats, and the Jezebels who crowded the courts of the Stuarts and the Georges, have been consigned to permanent infamy in libraries of learned and of brilliant works.

Brilliant and ingenious writing has been the bane of history; it has degraded its purpose, and perverted many of its uses. Histories have been written which

are little but minute pictures of scoundrelism and folly triumphant. Wretches, who if alive now would be consigned to the gallows or the hulks, have only to take, as it is said, a place in history, and generations after generations of learned men will pore over their lives, collect their letters, their portraits, or their books, search out every fact in their lives with prurient inquisitiveness, and chronicle their rascalities in twenty volumes. Such stories, some may say, have a human interest. So has the *Newgate Calendar* a human interest of a certain kind. Brilliant writing is a most delusive guide. In search of an effective subject for a telling picture, men have wandered into strange and dismal haunts. We none of us choose our friends on such a plan. Why, then, should we choose thus the friends round whom our recollections are to centre? We none of us wish to be intimate with a man simply because he is a picturesque-looking villain, nor do we bring to our firesides men who have the reputation of being the loudest braggarts or keenest sharpers of their time.

Let us pass by untouched these memoirs of the unmemorable—these lives of those who never can be said to have lived. Pass them all: these riotings, intrigues, and affectations of worthless men and worthless ages. Better to know nothing of the past than to know only its follies, though set forth in eloquent

language and with attractive anecdote. It does not profit to know the names of all the kings that ever lived, and the catalogue of all their whims and vices, and a minute list of their particular weaknesses, with all their fools, buffoons, mistresses, and valets. Again, some odd incident becomes the subject of the labour of lives, and fills volume after volume of ingenious trifling. Some wretched little squabble is exhumed, unimportant in itself, unimportant for the persons that were engaged in it, trivial in its results. Lives are spent in raking up old letters to show why or how some parasite like Sir T. Overbury was murdered, or to unravel some plot about a maid of honour, or a diamond necklace, or some conspiracy to turn out a minister or to detect some court impostor. There are plenty of things to find out, or, if people are afflicted with a morbid curiosity, there are Chinese puzzles or chess problems left for them to solve, without ransacking the public records and libraries to discover which out of a nameless crowd was the most unmitigated scoundrel, or who it is that must have the credit of being the author of some peculiarly venomous or filthy pamphlet. Why need we have six immense volumes to prove to the world that you have found the villain, and ask them to read all about him, and explain in brilliant language how some deed of darkness or some deed of folly really was done?

And they call this history. This serving up in spiced dishes of the clean and the unclean, the wholesome and the noxious; this plunging down into the charnelhouse of the great graveyard of the past, and stirring up the decaying carcasses of the outcasts and malefactors of the race. No good can come of such work: without plan, without purpose, without breadth of view, and without method; with nothing but a vague desire to amuse, and a morbid craving for novelty. If there is one common purpose running through the whole history of the past, if that history is the story of man's growth in dignity, and power, and goodness, if the gathered knowledge and the gathered conscience of past ages does control us, support us, inspire us, then is this commemorating these parasites and offscourings of the human race worse than pedantry or folly. It is filling us with an unnatural contempt for the greatness of the past—nay, it is committing towards our spiritual forefathers the same crime which Ham committed against his father Noah. It is a kind of sacrilege to the memory of the great men to whom we owe all we prize, if we waste our lives in poring over the acts of the puny creatures who only encumbered *their* path.

Men on the battle-field or in their study, by the labour of their brains or of their hands, have given us what we have, and made us what we are; a noble

army who have done battle with barbarism and the powers of nature, martyrs often to their duty; yet we are often invited to turn with indifference from the story of their long march and many victories, to find amusement amidst the very camp-followers and sutlers who hang upon their rear. If history has any lessons, any unity, any plan, let us turn to it for this. Let this be our test of what is history and what is not, that it teaches us something of the advance of human progress, that it tells us of some of those mighty spirits who have left their mark on all time, that it shows us the nations of the earth woven together in one purpose, or is lit up with those great ideas and those great purposes which have kindled the conscience of mankind.

Why is knowledge of any kind useful? It is certainly not true that a knowledge of facts, merely as facts, is desirable. Facts are infinite, and it is not the millionth part of them that is worth knowing. What some people call the pure love of truth often means only a pure love of intellectual fussiness. A statement may be true, and yet wholly worthless. It cannot be all facts which are the subject of knowledge. For instance, a man might learn by heart the *Post-Office Directory*, and a very remarkable mental exercise it would be; but he would hardly venture to call himself a well-informed man. No; we want the

facts only which add to our power, or will enable us to act. They only give us knowledge—they only are a part of education. For instance, we begin the study of mathematics; of algebra, or geometry. We hardly expect to turn it to practical account like another Hudibras, who could ‘tell the clock by algebra;’ but we do not find Euclid’s geometry help us to take the shortest cut to our own house. Our object is to know something of the simplest principles which underlie all the sciences: to understand practically what mathematical demonstration means: to bring home to our minds the conception of scientific axioms.

Again, we study some of the physical laws of nature—plain facts about gravitation, or heat, or light. What we want is to be able to know something of what our modern philosophers are talking about. We want to know why Faraday is a great teacher; to know what it is which seems to affect all nature equally; which brings us down heavily upon the earth if we stumble, and keeps the planets in their orbits. We want to understand what are laws of nature. We take up such pursuits as botany or geology; but then, again, not in order to discover a new medicine, or a gold-field, or a coal-mine. No, we want to know something of the mystery around us. We see intelligible structure, consistent unity, and common laws in the earth on which we live, with the view, I



presume, of feeling more at home in it, of becoming more attached to it, of living in it more happily. ~~Some~~ study physiology. We do not expect to discover the elixir of life, like an eminent novelist, nor do we expect to dispense with the aid of the surgeon. We want to get a glimpse of that marvellous framework of the human form, some notion of the laws of its existence, some idea of the powers which affect it, which depress or develop it, some knowledge of the relation of the thinking and feeling process and the thinking and feeling organ. We seek to know something of the influences to which all human nature is subject, to be able to understand what people mean when they tell us about laws of health, or laws of life, or laws of thought. We want to be in a position to decide for ourselves as to the trustworthiness of men upon whose judgment we depend for bodily existence.

Now, in this list of the subjects of a rational education something is wanting. It is the play of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark:—

‘ The proper study of mankind is man.’

Whilst Man is wanting, all the rest remains vague, and incomplete, and aimless. Mathematics ~~would~~ indeed be a jumble of figures if it ended in itself. But the moment we learn the influence which

some great discovery has had on the destinies of man; the moment we note how all human thought was lighted up when Galileo said that the sun, and not the earth, was the centre of our world; the moment we feel that the demonstrations of Euclid are things in which all human minds must agree—indeed, are almost the only things in which all do agree,—that moment the science has a meaning, and a clue, and a plan. It had none so long as it was disconnected from the history and the destiny of man—the past and the future. It is the same with every other science. What would be the meaning of laws of nature, unless by them man could act on nature? What would be the use of knowing the laws of health, unless we supposed that a sounder knowledge of them would ameliorate the condition of men? What, indeed, is the use of the improvement of the mind? It is far from obvious that mere exercise of the intellectual faculties alone is a good. A nation of Hamlets (to take a popular misconception of that character) would be more truly miserable, perhaps more truly despicable, than a nation of Bushmen. By a cultivated mind, a mental training, a sound education, we mean a state of mind by which we shall become more clear of our condition, of our powers, of our duties towards our fellows, of our true happiness, by which we may make ourselves better

citizens and better men—more civilised, in short. The preceding studies have been but a preparation. They have been only to strengthen the mind, and give it material for the true work of education—the inculcation of human duty.

All knowledge is imperfect, we may almost say meaningless, unless it tends to give us sounder notions of our human and social interests. What we need are clear principles about the moral nature of man as a social being; about the elements of human society; about the nature and capacities of the understanding. We want landmarks to guide us in our search after worthy guides, or true principles for social or political action. Human nature is unlike inorganic nature in this, that its varieties are greater, and that it shows continual change. The earth rolls round the sun in the same orbit now as in infinite ages past; but man moves forward in a variable line of progress. Age after age develops into new phases. It is a study of life, of growth, of variety. One generation shows one faculty of human nature in a striking degree; the next exhibits a different power. All, it is true, leave their mark upon all succeeding generations, and civilisation flows on like a vast river, gathering up the waters of its tributary streams. Hence it is that civilisation, being not a fixed or lifeless thing, cannot be studied as a fixed or lifeless subject. We can see it only in

its movement and its growth. Except for eclipses, some conjunctions of planets, and minor changes, one year is as good as another to the astronomer; but it is not so to the political observer. He must watch successions, and a wide field, and compare a long series of events. Hence it is that in all political, all social, all human questions whatever, history is the main resource of the inquirer.

To know what is most really natural to man as a social being, man must be looked at as he appears in a succession of ages, and in very various conditions. To learn the strength or scope of all his capacities together, he must be judged in those successive periods in which each in turn was best brought out. Let no one suppose that he will find all the human institutions and faculties equally well developed, and all in their due proportion and order, by simply looking at the state of civilisation now actually around us. Is it not a monstrous assumption that this world of to-day, so full of misery and discontent, strife and despair, ringing with cries of pain and cries for aid, can really embody forth to us complete and harmonious man? Are there no faculties within him yet fettered, no good instincts stifled, no high yearnings marred? Have we in this year reached the pinnacle of human perfection, lost nothing that we once had, gained all that we can gain? Surely, by the hopes

within us, No! But what is missing may often be seen in the history of the past. There, in the long struggle of man upwards, we may watch Humanity in various moods, and see some now forgotten power, capacity, or art yet destined to good service in the future. One by one we may light on the missing links in the chain which connects all races and all ages in one, or gather up the broken threads that must yet be woven into the complex fabric of life.

There is another side on which history is still more necessary as a guide to consistent and rational action. We need to know not merely what the essential qualities of civilisation and of our social nature really are; but we require to know the general course in which they are tending. The more closely we look at it, the more distinctly we see that progress moves in a clear and definite path; the development of man is not a casual or arbitrary motion: it moves in a regular and consistent plan. Each part is unfolded in due order—the whole expanding like a single plant. More and more steadily we see each age working out the gifts of the last and transmitting its labours to the next. More and more certain is our sense of being strong only as we wisely use the materials and follow in the track provided by the efforts of mankind. Everything proves how com-

pletely that influence surrounds us. Take our material existence alone. The earth's surface has been made, as we know it, mainly by man. It would be uninhabitable by numbers but for the long labours of those who cleared its primeval forests, drained its swamps, first tilled its rank soil. All the inventions on which we depend for existence, the instruments we use, were slowly worked out by the necessities of man in the childhood of the race. We can only modify or add to these. We could not discard all existing machines and construct an entirely new set of industrial implements.

Take our political existence. There again we are equally confined in limits. Our country as a political whole has been formed for us by a long series of wars, struggles, and common efforts. We could not refashion England, or divide it anew, if we tried for a century. Our great towns, our great roads, the local administrations of our counties, were sketched out for us by the Romans fifteen centuries since. Could we undo it if we tried, and make London a country village, or turn Birmingham into the metropolis? Some people think they could abolish some great institution, such as the House of Lords; but few reformers in this country have proposed to abolish the entire British Constitution. For centuries we endured an archaic law of real property. Such as it

was, it was made for us by our feudal ancestors misreading Roman texts. Turn whichever way we will, we shall find our political systems, laws, and administrations to have been provided for us.

The same holds good even more strongly in all moral and intellectual questions. Are we to suppose that whilst our daily life, our industry, our laws, our customs, are controlled by the traditions and materials of the past, our thoughts, our habits of mind, our beliefs, our moral sense, our ideas of right and wrong, our hopes and aspirations, are not just as truly formed by the civilisation in which we have been reared? We are indeed able to transform it, to develop it, and to give it new life and action; but we can only do so as we understand it. Without this all efforts, reforms, and revolutions are in vain. A change is made, but a few years pass over, and all the old causes reappear. There was some unnoticed power which was not touched, and it returns in full force. Take an instance from our own history. Cromwell and his Ironsides, who made the great English Revolution, swept away Monarchy, and Church, and Peers, and thought they were gone for ever. Their great chief dead, the old system returned like a tide, and ended in the orgies of Charles and James. The Catholic Church has been, as it is supposed, staggering in its last agonies now for many

centuries. Luther believed he had crushed it. Long before his time it seemed nothing but a lifeless mass of corruption. Pope after Pope has been driven into exile. Four or five times has the Church seemed utterly crushed. And yet here in this nineteenth century, it puts forth all its old pretensions, and covers its old territory.

In the great French Revolution it seemed, for once, that all extant institutions had been swept away. That devouring fire seemed to have burnt the growth of ages to the very root. Yet a few years pass, and all reappear—Monarchy, Church, Peers, Jesuits, Empire, and Praetorian guards. Again and again they are overthrown. Again and again they rise in greater pomp and pride. They who, with courage, energy, and enthusiasm too seldom imitated, sixty years ago carried the Reform of Parliament and swept away with a strong hand abuse and privilege, believed that a new era was opening for their country. What would they think now? When they abolished rotten boroughs, and test acts, and curtailed expenditure, little did they think that sixty years would find their descendants wrangling about Church Establishments, appealing to the House of Lords as a bulwark of freedom, and spending ninety millions a year. The experience of every one who was ever engaged in any public movement whatever reminds



him that every step made in advance seems too often wrung back from him by some silent and unnoticed power; he has felt enthusiasm give way to despair, and hopes become nothing but recollections.

What is this unseen power which seems to undo the best human efforts, as if it were some overbearing weight against which no man can long struggle? What is this ever-acting force which seems to revive the dead, to restore what we destroy, to renew forgotten watchwords, exploded fallacies, discredited doctrines, and condemned institutions; against which enthusiasm, intellect, truth, high purpose, and self-devotion seem to beat themselves to death in vain? It is the Past. It is the accumulated wills and works of all mankind around us and before us. It is civilisation. It is that power which to understand is strength, which to repudiate is weakness. Let us not think that there can be any real progress made which is not based on a sound knowledge of the living institutions and the active wants of mankind. If we can only act on nature so far as we know its laws, we can only influence society so far as we understand its elements and ways. Let us not delude ourselves into thinking that new principles of policy or social action can be created by themselves or can reconstruct society about us. Those rough maxims, which we are wont to dignify by the name of prin-

ciples, may be, after all, only crude formulas and phrases without life or power. Only when they have been tested, analysed, and compared with other phases of social life, can we be certain that they are immutable truths. Nothing but a thorough knowledge of the social system, based upon a regular study of its growth, can give us the power we require to affect it. For this end we need one thing above all—we need history.

It may be said—all this may be very useful for statesmen, or philosophers, or politicians; but what is the use of this to the bulk of the people? They are not engaged in solving political questions. The bulk of the people, if they are seeking to live the lives of rational and useful citizens, if they only wish to do their duty by their neighbours, are really and truly politicians. They are solving political problems, and are affecting society very deeply. A man does not need even to be a vestryman, he need not even have one out of the 500,000 votes for London, in order to exercise very great political influence. A man, provided he lives like an honest, thoughtful, truth-speaking citizen, is a power in the state. He is helping to form that which rules the state, which rules statesmen, and is above kings, parliaments, or ministers. He is forming *public opinion*. It is on this, a public opinion, wise, thoughtful, and consistent,

that the destinies of our country rest, and not on acts of parliament, or movements, or institutions.

It is sheer presumption to attempt to remodel existing institutions, without the least knowledge how they were formed, or whence they grew; to deal with social questions without a thought how society arose; to construct a social creed without an idea of fifty creeds which have risen and vanished before. Few men would, intentionally, attempt so much; but many do it unconsciously. They think they are not statesmen, or teachers, or philosophers; but, in one sense, they are. In all human affairs there is this peculiar quality. They are the work of the combined labours of many. No statesman or teacher can do anything alone. He must have the minds of those he is to guide prepared for him. They must concur, or he is powerless. In reality, he is but the expression of their united wills and thoughts. Hence it is, I say, that all men need, in some sense, the knowledge and the judgment of the statesman and the social teacher. Progress is but the result of our joint public opinion; and for progress that opinion must be enlightened. 'He only destroys who can replace.' All other progress than this—one based on the union of many minds and purposes, and a true conception of the future and the past—is transitory and delusive. Those who defy this power, the man,

the party, or the class who forget it, will be beating themselves in vain against a wall; changing, but not improving; moving, but not advancing; rolling, as the poet says of a turbulent city, like a sick man on the restless bed of pain.

The value of a knowledge of history being admitted, there follows the complicated problem of how to acquire it. There are oceans of facts, mountains of books. This is the question before us. It is possible to know something of history without a pedantic erudition. Let a man ask himself always what he wants to know. Something of man's social nature; something of the growth of civilisation. He needs to understand something of the character of the great races and systems of mankind. Let him ask himself what the long ages of the early empires did for mankind; whether they established or taught anything; if fifty centuries of human skill, labour, and thought were wasted like an autumn leaf. Let him ask himself what the Greeks taught or discovered: why the Romans were a noble race, and how they printed their footmarks so deeply on the earth. Let him ask what was the original meaning and life of those great feudal institutions of chivalry and church, of which we see only the remnants. Let him ask what was the strength, the weakness, and the meaning of the great revolution of Cromwell, or

the great revolution in France. A man may learn much true history, without any very ponderous books. Let him go to the museums and see the pictures, the statues, and buildings of Egyptian and Assyrian times, and try to learn what was the state of society under which men in the far East reached so high a pitch of industry, knowledge, and culture, three thousand years before our savage ancestors had learned to use the plough. A man may go to one of our Gothic cathedrals, and, seeing there the stupendous grandeur of its outline, the exquisite grace of its design, the solemn expression upon the faces of its old carved or painted saints, kings, and priests, may ask himself if the men who built that could be utterly barbarous, false-hearted, and tyrannical; or if the power which could bring out such noble qualities of the human mind and heart must not have left its trace upon mankind.

It does not need many books to know something of the life of the past. A man who has mastered the lives in old Plutarch knows not a little of Greek and Roman history. A man who has caught the true spirit of the Middle Ages knows something of feudalism and chivalry. But is this enough? Far from it. These desultory thoughts must be connected. These need to be combined into a whole, and combined and used for a purpose. Above all, we must look on

history as a whole, trying to find what each age and race has contributed to the common stock, and how and why each followed in its place. Looked at separately, all is confusion and contradiction: looked at as a whole, a common purpose appears. The history of the human race is the history of a growth. It can no more be taken to pieces than the human frame can be taken to pieces. Who would think of making anything of the body without knowing whether it possessed a circulation, a nervous system, or a skeleton. History is a living whole. If one organ be removed, it is nothing but a lifeless mass. What we have to find in it is the relation and connection of the parts. We must learn how age develops into age, how country reacts upon country, how thought inspires action, and action modifies thought.

Once conceive that all the greater periods of history have had a real and necessary part to fulfil in creating the whole, and we shall have done more to understand it than if we had studied some portion of it with a microscope. Once feel that all the parts are needed for the whole, and the difficulty of the mass of materials vanishes. We shall come to regard it as a composition or a work of art which cannot be broken up into fragments at pleasure. We should as soon think of dividing it as of taking a figure out of a great picture, or a passage out of a piece of music.

We all know those noble choruses of Handel, such as that 'Unto us a child is born,' and have heard the opening notes begin simple, subdued, and slow, until they are echoed back in deeper tones, choir answering to choir, voice joining in with voice, growing fuller and stronger with new and varying bursts of melody, until the whole stream of song swells into one vast tide of harmony, and rolls on abounding, wave upon wave in majestic exultation and power. Something like this complex harmony is seen in the gathering parts of human history, age taking up the falling notes from age, race joining with race in answering strain, until the separate parts are mingled in one, and pour on in one movement together.

There is one mode in which history may be most easily, perhaps most usefully, approached. Let him who desires to find profit in it, begin by knowing something of the lives of great men. Not of those most talked about, not of names chosen at hazard; but of the real great ones who can be shown to have left their mark upon distant ages. Know their lives, not merely as interesting studies of character, or as persons seen in a drama, but as they represent and influence their age. Not for themselves only must we know them, but as the expression and types of all that is noblest around them. Let us know those whom all men cannot fail to recognise as great—the

Cæsars, the Charlemagnes, the Alfreds, the Cromwells, great in themselves, but greater as the centre of the efforts of thousands.

We have done much towards understanding the past when we have learned to value and to honour such men. It is almost better to know nothing of history than to know with the narrow coldness of a pedant a record which ought to fill us with emotion and reverence. Our closest friends, our earliest teachers, our parents themselves, are not more truly our benefactors than they. To them we owe what we prize most—country, freedom, peace, knowledge, art, thought, and higher sense of right and wrong. What a tale of patience, courage, sacrifice, and martyrdom is the history of human progress! It affects us as if we were reading in the diary of a parent the record of his struggles for his children. For us they toiled, endured, bled, and died; that we by their labour might have rest, by their thoughts might know, by their death might live happily. For whom did these men work, if not for us? Not for themselves, when they gave up peace, honour, life, reputation itself—as when the great French republican exclaimed, ‘May my name be accursed, so that France be free!’—not for themselves they worked, but for their cause, for their fellows, for us. Not that they might have fame, but that they might



leave the world better than they found it. This supported Milton in his old age, blind, poor, and dishonoured, when he poured out his spirit in solitude, full of grace, tenderness, and hope, amidst the ruin of all he loved and the obscene triumph of all he despised. It supported Dante, the poet of Florence, when an outlaw and an exile he was cast off by friends and countrymen, and wandered about begging his bread from city to city, pondering the great thoughts which live throughout all Europe. This spirit, too, was in one, the noblest victim of the French Revolution, the philosopher Condorcet; who, condemned, hunted to death, devoted the last few days of his life to serene thought of the past, and, whilst the pursuers were on his track, wrote in his hiding-place that noble sketch of the progress of the human race.

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## THE GENIUS OF JAPANESE CIVILIZATION.

### I

WITHOUT losing a single ship or a single battle, Japan has broken down the power of China, made a new Korea, enlarged her own territory, and changed the whole political face of the East. Astonishing as this has seemed politically, it is much more astonishing psychologically; for it represents the result of a vast play of capacities with which the race had never been credited abroad,—capacities of a very high order. The psychologist knows that the so-called “adoption of Western civilization” within a time of thirty years cannot mean the addition to the Japanese brain of any organs or powers previously absent from it. He knows that it cannot mean any sudden change in the mental or moral character of the race. Such changes are not made in a generation. Transmitted civilization works much more slowly, requiring even hundreds of years to produce certain permanent psychological results.

It is in this light that Japan appears the most extraordinary country in the world; and the most

wonderful thing in the whole episode of her "Occidentalization" is that the race brain could bear so heavy a shock. Nevertheless, though the fact be unique in human history, what does it really mean? Nothing more than rearrangement of a part of the pre-existing machinery of thought. Even that, for thousands of brave young minds, was death. The adoption of Western civilization was not nearly such an easy matter as unthinking persons imagined. And it is quite evident that the mental readjustments, effected at a cost which remains to be told, have given good results only along directions in which the race had always shown capacities of special kinds. Thus, the appliances of Western industrial invention have worked admirably in Japanese hands,—have produced excellent results in those crafts at which the nation had been skilful, in other and quainter ways, for ages. There has been no transformation,—nothing more than the turning of old abilities into new and larger channels. The scientific professions tell the same story. For certain forms of science, such as medicine, surgery (there are no better surgeons in the world than the Japanese), chemistry, microscopy, the Japanese genius is naturally adapted; and in all these it has done work already heard of round the world. In war and statecraft it has shown wonderful power; but throughout their history the Japanese have been

characterized by great military and political capacity. Nothing remarkable has been done, however, in directions foreign to the national genius. In the study, for example, of Western music, Western art, Western literature, time would seem to have been simply wasted.\* These things make appeal extraordinary to emotional life with us; they make no such appeal to Japanese emotional life. Every serious thinker knows that emotional transformation of the individual through education is impossible. X To imagine that the emotional character of an Oriental race could be transformed in the short space of thirty years, by the contact of Occidental ideas, is absurd. Emotional life, which is older than intellectual life, and deeper, can no more be altered suddenly by a change of *milieu* than the surface of a mirror can be changed by passing reflections. All that Japan has been able to do so miraculously well has been done without any self-transformation; and those, who imagine her emotionally closer to us to-day than she

\* In one limited sense, Western art has influenced Japanese literature and drama; but the character of the influence proves the racial differences to which I refer. European plays have been reshaped for the Japanese stage, and European novels rewritten for Japanese readers. But a literal version is rarely attempted: for the original incidents, thoughts, and emotions would be unintelligible to the average reader or play-goer. Plots are adopted: sentiments and incidents are totally transformed.

may have been thirty years ago, ignore facts of science which admit of no argument.

Sympathy is limited by comprehension. We may sympathize to the same degree that we understand. One may imagine that he sympathizes with a Japanese or a Chinese; but the sympathy can never be real to more than a small extent outside of the simplest phases of common emotional life,—those phases in which child and man are at one. The more complex feelings of the Oriental have been composed by combinations of experiences, ancestral and individual, which have had no really precise correspondence in Western life, and which we can therefore not fully know. For converse reasons, the Japanese cannot, even though they would, give Europeans their best sympathy.

But while it remains impossible for the man of the West to discern the true colour of Japanese life, either intellectual or emotional (since the one is woven into the other), it is equally impossible for him to escape the conviction that, compared with his own, it is very small. It is dainty; it holds delicate potentialities of rarest interest and value; but it is otherwise so small that Western life, by contrast with it, seems almost supernatural. For we must judge visible and measurable manifestations. So judging, what a contrast between the emotional and intellec-

tual worlds of West and East! Far less striking that between the frail wooden streets of the Japanese capital and the tremendous solidity of a thoroughfare in Paris or London. When one compares the utterances which West and East have given to their dreams, their aspirations, their sensations,—a Gothic cathedral with a Shinto temple, an opera by Verdi or a trilogy by Wagner with a performance of *geisha*, a European epic with a Japanese poem,—how incalculable the difference in emotional volume, in imaginative power, in artistic synthesis! True, our music is an essentially modern art; but in looking back through all our past the difference in creative force is scarcely less marked,—not surely in the period of Roman magnificence, of marble amphitheatres and of aqueducts spanning provinces, nor in the Greek period of the divine in sculpture and of the supreme in literature.

And this leads to the subject of another wonderful fact in the sudden development of Japanese power. Where are the outward material signs of that immense new force she has been showing both in productivity and in war? Nowhere! That which we miss in her emotional and intellectual life is missing also from her industrial and commercial life,—largeness! The land remains what it was before; its face has scarcely been modified by all the changes

of Meiji. The miniature railways and telegraph poles, the bridges and tunnels, might almost escape notice in the ancient green of the landscapes. In all the cities, with the exception of the open ports and their little foreign settlements, there exists hardly a street vista suggesting the teaching of Western ideas. You might journey two hundred miles through the interior of the country, looking in vain for large manifestations of the new civilization. In no place do you find commerce exhibiting its ambition in gigantic warehouses, or industry expanding its machinery under acres of roofing. A Japanese city is still, as it was ten centuries ago, little more than a wilderness of wooden sheds,—picturesque, indeed, as paper lanterns are, but scarcely less frail. And there is no great stir and noise anywhere,—no heavy traffic, no booming and rumbling, no furious haste. In Tokyo itself you may enjoy, if you wish, the peace of a country village. This want of visible or audible signs of the new-found force which is now menacing the markets of the West and changing the maps of the Far East gives one a queer, I might even say a weird feeling. It is almost the sensation received when, after climbing through miles of silence to reach some Shinto shrine, you find voidness only and solitude,—an elfish, empty little wooden structure, mouldering in shadows a thousand years old. The

strength of Japan, like the strength of her ancient faith, needs little material display: both exist where the deepest real power of any great people exists,—in the Race Ghost.

## II

As I muse the remembrance of a great city comes back to me,—a city walled up to the sky and roaring like the sea. The memory of that roar returns first; then the vision defines: a chasm, which is a street, between mountains, which are houses. I am tired, because I have walked many miles between those precipices of masonry, and have trodden no earth,—only slabs of rock,—and have heard nothing but thunder of tumult. Deep below those huge pavements I know there is a cavernous world tremendous: systems underlying systems of ways contrived for water and steam and fire. On either hand tower façades pierced by scores of tiers of windows,—cliffs of architecture shutting out the sun. Above, the pale blue streak of sky is cut by a maze of spidery lines,—an infinite cobweb of electric wires. In that block on the right there dwell nine thousand souls; the tenants of the edifice facing it pay the annual rent of a million dollars. Seven millions scarcely covered the cost of those bulks overshadowing the square beyond,—and there are miles of such. Stairways of



steel and cement, of brass and stone, with costliest balustrades, ascend through the decades and double-decades of stories; but no foot treads them. By waterpower, by steam, by electricity, men go up and down; the heights are too dizzy, the distances too great, for the use of the limbs. My friend, who pays rent of five thousand dollars for his rooms in the fourteenth story of a monstrosity not far off, has never trodden his stairway. I am walking for curiosity alone; with a serious purpose I should not walk: the spaces are too broad, the time is too precious, for such slow exertion,—men travel from district to district, from house to office, by steam. Heights are too great for the voice to traverse; orders are given and obeyed by machinery. By electricity far-away doors are opened; with one touch a hundred rooms are lighted or heated.

And all this enormity is hard, grim, dumb; it is the enormity of mathematical power applied to utilitarian ends of solidity and durability. These leagues of palaces, of warehouses, of business structures, of buildings describable and indescribable, are not beautiful, but sinister. One feels depressed by the mere sensation of the enormous life which created them, life without sympathy; of their prodigious manifestation of power, power without pity. They are the architectural utterance of the new industrial

age. And there is no halt in the thunder of wheels, in the storming of hoofs and of human feet. To ask a question, one must shout into the ear of the questioned; to see, to understand, to move in that high-pressure medium, needs experience. The unaccustomed feels the sensation of being in a panic, in a tempest, in a cyclone. Yet all this is order.

The monster streets leap rivers, span seaways, with bridges of stone, bridges of steel. Far as the eye can reach, a bewilderment of masts, a web-work of rigging, conceals the shores, which are cliffs of masonry. Trees in a forest stand less thickly, branches in a forest mingle less closely, than the masts and spars of that immeasurable maze. Yet all is order.

### III

Generally speaking, we construct for endurance, the Japanese for impermanency. Few things for common use are made in Japan with a view to durability. The straw sandals worn out and replaced at each stage of a journey; the robe consisting of a few simple widths loosely stitched together for wearing, and unstitched again for washing; the fresh chopsticks served to each new guest at a hotel; the light *shoji* frames serving at once for windows and walls, and repapered twice a year; the mattings

renewed every autumn,—all these are but random examples of countless small things in daily life that illustrate the national contentment with impermanency.

What is the story of a common Japanese dwelling? Leaving my home in the morning, I observe, as I pass the corner of the next street crossing mine, some men setting up bamboo poles on a vacant lot there. Returning after five hours' absence, I find on the same lot the skeleton of a two-story house. Next forenoon I see that the walls are nearly finished already,—mud and wattles. By sun-down the roof has been completely tiled. On the following morning I observe that the mattings have been put down, and the inside plastering has been finished. In five days the house is completed. This, of course, is a cheap building; a fine one would take much longer to put up and finish. But Japanese cities are for the most part composed of such common buildings. They are as cheap as they are simple.

I cannot now remember where I first met with the observation that the curve of the Chinese roof might preserve the memory of the nomad tent. The idea haunted me long after I had ungratefully forgotten the book in which I found it; and when I first saw, in Izumo, the singular structure of the old Shinto temples, with queer cross-projections at their

gable-ends and upon their roof-ridges, the suggestion of the forgotten essayist about the possible origin of much less ancient forms returned to me with great force. But there is much in Japan besides primitive architectural traditions to indicate a nomadic ancestry for the race. Always and everywhere there is a total absence of what we would call solidity; and the characteristics of impermanence seem to mark almost everything in the exterior life of the people, except, indeed, the immemorial costume of the peasant and the shape of the implements of his toil. Not to dwell upon the fact that even during the comparatively brief period of her written history Japan has had more than sixty capitals, of which the greater number have completely disappeared, it may be broadly stated that every Japanese city is rebuilt within the time of a generation. Some temples and a few colossal fortresses offer exceptions; but, as a general rule, the Japanese city changes its substance, if not its form, in the lifetime of a man. Fires, earthquakes, and many other causes partly account for this; the chief reason, however, is that houses are not built to last. The common people have no ancestral homes. The dearest spot to all is, not the place of birth, but the place of burial; and there is little that is permanent save the resting-places of the dead and the sites of the ancient shrines.

The land itself is a land of impermanence. Rivers shift their courses, coasts their outline, plains their level; volcanic peaks heighten or crumble; valleys are blocked by lava-floods or landslides; lakes appear and disappear. Even the matchless shape of Fuji, that snowy miracle which has been the inspiration of artists for centuries, is said to have been slightly changed since my advent to the country; and not a few other mountains have in the same short time taken totally new forms. Only the general lines of the land, the general aspects of its nature, the general character of the seasons, remain fixed. Even the very beauty of the landscapes is largely illusive,—a beauty of shifting colours and moving mists. Only he to whom those landscapes are familiar can know how their mountain vapours make mockery of real changes which have been, and ghostly predictions of other changes yet to be, in the history of the archipelago.

The gods, indeed, remain,—haunt their homes upon the hills, diffuse a soft religious awe through the twilight of their groves, perhaps because they are without form and substance. Their shrines seldom pass utterly into oblivion, like the dwellings of men. But every Shinto temple is necessarily rebuilt at more or less brief intervals; and the holiest,—the shrine of Isé,—in obedience to immemorial custom, must

be demolished every twenty years, and its timbers cut into thousands of tiny charms, which are distributed to pilgrims.

From Aryan India, through China, came Buddhism, with its vast doctrine of impermanency. The builders of the first Buddhist temples in Japan—architects of another race—built well: witness the Chinese structures at Kamakura that have survived so many centuries, while of the great city which once surrounded them not a trace remains. But the psychological influence of Buddhism could in no land impel minds to the love of material stability. The teaching that the universe is an illusion; that life is but one momentary halt upon an infinite journey; that all attachment to persons, to places, or to things must be fraught with sorrow; that only through suppression of every desire—even the desire of Nirvana itself—can humanity reach the eternal peace, certainly harmonized with the older racial feeling. Though the people never much occupied themselves with the profounder philosophy of the foreign faith, its doctrine of impermanency must, in course of time, have profoundly influenced national character. It explained and consoled; it imparted new capacity to bear all things bravely; it strengthened that patience which is a trait of the race. Even in Japanese art—developed, if not actually created, under Buddhist

influence—the doctrine of impermanency has left its traces. Buddhism taught that nature was a dream, an illusion, a phantasmagoria; but it also taught men how to seize the fleeting impressions of that dream, and how to interpret them in relation to the highest truth. And they learned well. In the flushed splendour of the blossom-bursts of spring, in the coming and the going of the cicadæ, in the dying crimson of autumn foliage, in the ghostly beauty of snow, in the delusive motion of wave or cloud, they saw old parables of perpetual meaning. Even their calamities—fire, flood, earthquake, pestilence—interpreted to them unceasingly the doctrine of the eternal Vanishing.

*All things which exist in Time must perish. The forests, the mountains,—all things thus exist. In Time are born all things having desire.*

*The Sun and Moon, Sakra himself, with all the multitude of his attendants, will all, without exception, perish; there is not one that will endure.*

*In the beginning things were fixed; in the end again they separate: different combinations cause other substance; for in nature there is no uniform and constant principle.*

*All component things must grow old; impermanent are all component things. Even unto a grain of sesamum seed there is no such thing as a compound*

*which is permanent. All are transient; all have the inherent quality of dissolution.*

*All component things, without exception, are impermanent, unstable, deprecable, sure to depart, disintegrating; all are temporary as a mirage, as a phantom, or as foam.....Even as all earthen vessels made by the potter end in being broken, so end the lives of men.*

*And a belief in matter itself is unmentionable and inexpressible,—it is neither a thing nor no-thing: and this is known even by children and ignorant persons*

#### IV

Now it is worth while to inquire if there be not some compensatory value attaching to this impermanency and this smallness in the national life.

Nothing is more characteristic of that life than its extreme fluidity. The Japanese population represents a medium whose particles are in perpetual circulation. The motion is in itself peculiar. It is larger and more eccentric than the motion of Occidental populations, though feebler between points. It is also much more natural,—so natural that it could not exist in Western civilization. The relative mobility of a European population and the Japanese



population might be expressed by a comparison between certain high velocities of vibration and certain low ones. But the high velocities would represent, in such a comparison, the consequence of artificial force applied; the slower vibrations would not. And this difference of kind would mean more than surface indications could announce. In one sense, Americans may be right in thinking themselves great travellers. In another, they are certainly wrong; the man of the people in America cannot compare, as a traveller, with the man of the people in Japan. And of course, in considering relative mobility of populations, one must consider chiefly the great masses, the workers,—not merely the small class of wealth. In their own country, the Japanese are the greatest travellers of any civilized people. They are the greatest travellers because, even in a land composed mainly of mountain chains, they recognize no obstacles to travel. The Japanese who travels most is not the man who needs railways or steamers to carry him.

Now, with us, the common worker is incomparably less free than the common worker in Japan. He is less free because of the more complicated mechanism of Occidental societies, whose forces tend to agglomeration and solid integration. He is less free because the social and industrial machinery on which

he must depend reshapes him to its own particular requirements, and always so as to evolve some special and artificial capacity at the cost of other inherent capacity. He is less free because he must live at a standard making it impossible for him to win financial independence by mere thrift. To achieve any such independence, he must possess exceptional character and exceptional faculties greater than those of thousands of exceptional competitors equally eager to escape from the same thralldom. In brief, then, he is less independent because the special character of his civilization numbs his natural power to live without the help of machinery or large capital. To live thus artificially means to lose, sooner or later, the power of independent movement. Before a Western man can move, he has many things to consider. Before a Japanese moves, he has nothing to consider. He simply leaves the place he dislikes, and goes to the place he wishes, without any trouble. There is nothing to prevent him. Poverty is not an obstacle, but a stimulus. Impedimenta he has none, or only such as he can dispose of in a few minutes. Distances have no significance for him. Nature has given him perfect feet that can spring him over fifty miles a day without pain; a stomach whose chemistry can extract ample nourishment from food on which no European could live; and a constitution

that scorns heat, cold, and damp alike, because still unimpaired by unhealthy clothing, by superfluous comforts, by the habit of seeking warmth from grates and stoves, and by the habit of wearing leather shoes.

It seems to me that the character of our foot-gear signifies more than is commonly supposed. The footgear represents in itself a check upon individual freedom. It signifies this even in costliness; but in form it signifies infinitely more. It has distorted the Western foot out of the original shape, and rendered it incapable of the work for which it was evolved. The physical results are not limited to the foot. Whatever acts as a check, directly or indirectly, upon the organs of locomotion must extend its effects to the whole physical constitution. Does the evil stop even there? Perhaps we submit to conventions the most absurd of any existing in any civilization, because we have too long submitted to the tyranny of shoemakers. There may be defects in our politics, in our social ethics, in our religious system, more or less related to the habit of wearing leather shoes. Submission to the cramping of the body must certainly aid in developing submission to the cramping of the mind.

The Japanese man of the people—the skilled labourer able to underbid without effort any Western artisan in the same line of industry—remains happily

independent of both shoemakers and tailors. His feet are good to look at, his body is healthy, and his heart is free. If he desire to travel a thousand miles, he can get ready for his journey in five minutes. His whole outfit need not cost seventy-five cents; and all his baggage can be put into a handkerchief. On ten dollars he can travel for a year without work, or he can travel simply on his ability to work, or he can travel as a pilgrim. You may reply that any savage can do the same thing. Yes, but any civilized man cannot; and the Japanese has been a highly civilized man for at least a thousand years. Hence his present capacity to threaten Western manufacturers.

We have been too much accustomed to associate this kind of independent mobility with the life of our own beggars and tramps, to have any just conception of its intrinsic meaning. We have thought of it also in connection with unpleasant things,—uncleanliness and bad smells. But, as Professor Chamberlain has well said, "a Japanese crowd is the sweetest in the world." Your Japanese tramp takes his hot bath daily, if he has a fraction of a cent to pay for it, or his cold bath, if he has not. In his little bundle there are combs, toothpicks, razors, toothbrushes. He never allows himself to become unpleasant. Reaching his destination, he can

transform himself into a visitor of very nice manners, and faultless though simple attire.\*

Ability to live without furniture, without impedimenta, with the least possible amount of neat clothing, shows more than the advantage held by this Japanese race in the struggle of life; it shows also the real character of some weaknesses in our own civilization. It forces reflection upon the useless multiplicity of our daily wants. We must have meat and bread and butter; glass windows and fire; hats, white shirts, and woolen underwear; boots and shoes; trunks, bags and boxes; bedsteads, mattresses, sheets, and blankets: all of which a Japanese can do without, and is really better off without. Think for a moment how important an article of Occidental attire is the single costly item of white shirts! Yet even the linen shirt, the so-called "badge of a gentleman," is in itself a useless garment. It gives neither warmth nor comfort. It represents in our fashions the survival of something—once a luxurious

\* Critics have tried to make fun of Sir Edwin Arnold's remark that a Japanese crowd smells like a geranium-flower. Yet the simile is exact! The perfume called *jako*, when sparingly used, might easily be taken for the odour of a musk-geranium. In almost any Japanese assembly including women, a slight perfume of *jako* is discernible; for the robes worn have been laid in drawers containing a few grains of *jako*. Except for this delicate scent, a Japanese crowd is absolutely odourless.

class distinction, but to-day meaningless and useless as the buttons sewn on the outside of coat-sleeves.

## v

The absence of any huge signs of the really huge things that Japan has done bears witness to the very peculiar way in which her civilization has been working. It cannot forever so work; but it has so worked thus far with amazing success. Japan is producing without capital, in our large sense of the word. She has become industrial without becoming essentially mechanical and artificial. The vast rice crop is raised upon millions of tiny, tiny farms; the silk crop, in millions of small poor homes; the tea crop, on countless little patches of soil. If you visit Kyoto to order something from one of the greatest porcelain makers in the world, one whose products are known better in London and in Paris than even in Japan, you will find the factory to be a wooden cottage in which no American farmer would live. The greatest maker of *cloisonné* vases, who may ask you two hundred dollars for something five inches high, produces his miracles behind a two-story frame dwelling containing perhaps six small rooms. The best girdles of silk made in Japan, and famous throughout the Empire, are woven in a house that cost scarcely five hundred dollars to build. The work is of

course, hand-woven. But the factories weaving by machinery—and weaving so well as to ruin foreign industries of far vaster capacity—are hardly more imposing, with very few exceptions. Long, light, low one-story or two-story sheds they are, about as costly to erect as a row of wooden stables with us. Yet sheds like these turn out silks that sell all round the world. Sometimes only by inquiry, or by the humming of the machinery, can you distinguish a factory from an old *yashiki*, or an old-fashioned Japanese school building,—unless indeed you can read the Chinese characters over the garden gate. Some big brick factories and breweries exist; but they are very few, and even when close to the foreign settlements, they seem incongruities in the landscape.

Our own architectural monstrosities and our Babels of machinery have been brought into existence by vast integrations of industrial capital. But such integrations do not exist in the Far East; indeed, the capital to make them does not exist. And supposing that in the course of a few generations there should form in Japan corresponding combinations of money power, it is not easy to suppose correspondences in architectural construction. Even two-story edifices of brick have given bad results in the leading commercial centre; and earthquakes seem to condemn Japan to perpetual simplicity in building.

The very land revolts against the imposition of Western architecture, and occasionally even opposes the new course of traffic by pushing railroad lines out of level and out of shape.

Not industry alone still remains thus unintegrated; government itself exhibits a like condition. Nothing is fixed except the Throne. Perpetual change is identical with state policy. Ministers, governors, superintendents, inspectors, all high civil and military officials, are shifted at irregular and surprisingly short intervals, and hosts of smaller officials scatter each time with the whirl. The province in which I passed the first twelvemonth of my residence in Japan has had four different governors in five years. During my stay at Kumamoto, and before the war had begun, the military command of that important post was three times changed. The government college had in three years three directors. In educational circles, especially, the rapidity of such changes has been phenomenal. There have been five different ministers of education in my own time, and more than five different educational policies. The twenty-six thousand public schools are so related in their management to the local assemblies that, even were no other influences at work, constant change would be inevitable because of the changes in the assemblies. Directors and teachers keep circling from



post to post; there are men little more than thirty years old who have taught in almost every province of the country. That any educational system could have produced any great results under these conditions seems nothing short of miraculous.

We are accustomed to think that some degree of stability is necessary to all real progress, all great development. But Japan has given proof irrefutable that enormous development is possible without any stability at all. The explanation is in the race character,—a race character in more ways than one the very opposite of our own. Uniformly mobile, and thus uniformly impressionable, the nation has moved unitedly in the direction of great ends; submitting the whole volume of its forty millions to be moulded by the ideas of its rulers, even as sand or as water is shaped by wind. And this submissiveness to reshaping belongs to the old conditions of its soul life,—old conditions of rare unselfishness and perfect faith. The relative absence from the national character of egotistical individualism has been the saving of an empire; has enabled a great people to preserve its independence against prodigious odds. Wherefore Japan may well be grateful to her two great religions, the creators and the preservers of her moral power: to Shinto, which taught the individual to think of his Emperor and of his country before thinking either of

his own family or of himself; and to Buddhism, which trained him to master regret, to endure pain, and to accept as eternal law the vanishing of things loved and the tyranny of things hated.

To-day there is visible a tendency to hardening, —a danger of changes leading to the integration of just such an officialism as that which has proved the curse and the weakness of China. The moral results of the new education have not been worthy of the material results. The charge of want of "individuality," in the accepted sense of pure selfishness, will scarcely be made against the Japanese of the next century. Even the compositions of students already reflect the new conception of intellectual strength only as a weapon of offence, and the new sentiment of aggressive egotism. "Impermanency," writes one, with a fading memory of Buddhism in his mind, "is the nature of our life. We see often persons who were rich yesterday, and are poor to-day. This is the result of human competition, according to the law of evolution. We are exposed to that competition. We must fight each other, even if we are not inclined to do so. With what sword shall we fight? With the sword of knowledge, forged by education."

Well, there are two forms of the cultivation of Self. One leads to the exceptional development of

the qualities which are noble, and the other signifies something about which the less said the better. But it is not the former which the New Japan is now beginning to study. I confess to being one of those who believe that the human heart, even in the history of a race, may be worth infinitely more than the human intellect, and that it will sooner or later prove itself infinitely better able to answer all the cruel enigmas of the Sphinx of Life. I still believe that the old Japanese were nearer to the solution of those enigmas than are we, just because they recognized moral beauty as greater than intellectual beauty. And, by way of conclusion, I may venture to quote from an article on education by Ferdinand Brunetière:—

“ All our educational measures will prove vain, if there be no effort to force into the mind, and to deeply impress upon it, the sense of those fine words of Lamennais: ‘ *Human society is based upon mutual giving, or upon the sacrifice of man for man, or of each man for all other men; and sacrifice is the very essence of all true society.*’ It is this that we have been unlearning for nearly a century; and if we have to put ourselves to school afresh, it will be in order that we may learn it again. Without such knowledge there can be no society and no education, —not, at least, if the object of education be to form

man for society. Individualism is to-day the enemy of education, as it is also the enemy of social order. It has not been so always; but it has so become. It will not be so forever; but it is so now. And without striving to destroy it—which would mean to fall from one extreme into another—we must recognize that, no matter what we wish to do for the family, for society, for education, and for the country, it is against individualism that the work will have to be done.”

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## FALSTAFF

THERE is more material for a life of Falstaff than for a life of Shakespeare, though for both there is a lamentable dearth. The difficulties of the biographer are, however, different in the two cases. There is nothing, or next to nothing, in Shakespeare's works which throws light on his own story; and such evidence as we have is of the kind called circumstantial. But Falstaff constantly gives us reminiscences or allusions to his earlier life, and his companions also tell us stories which ought to help us in a biography. The evidence, such as it is, is direct; and the only inference we have to draw is that from the statement to the truth of the statement.

It has been justly remarked by Sir James Stephen, that this very inference is perhaps the most difficult one of all to draw correctly. The inference from so-called circumstantial evidence, if you have enough of it, is much surer; for whilst facts cannot lie, witnesses can, and frequently do. The witnesses on whom we have to rely for the facts are Falstaff and his companions—especially Falstaff.

When an old man tries to tell you the story of his youth, he sees the facts through a distorting

subjective medium, and gives an impression of his history and exploits more or less at variance with the bare facts as seen by a contemporary outsider. The scientific Goethe, though truthful enough in the main, certainly fails in his reminiscences to tell a plain unvarnished tale. And Falstaff was *not* habitually truthful. Indeed, that Western American, who wrote affectionately on the tomb of a comrade, "As a truth-crusher he was unrivalled," had probably not given sufficient attention to Falstaff's claims in this matter. Then Falstaff's companions are not witnesses above suspicion. Generally speaking, they lie open to the charge made by P. P. against the wags of his parish, that they were men delighting more in their own conceits than in the truth. These are some of our difficulties, and we ask the reader's indulgence in our endeavours to overcome them. We will tell the story from our hero's birth, and will not begin longer *before* that event than is usual with biographers.

The question, *Where* was Falstaff born? has given us some trouble. We confess to having once entertained a strong opinion that he was a Devonshire man. This opinion was based simply on the flow and fertility of his wit as shown in his conversation, and the rapid and fantastic play of his imagination. But we sought in vain for any verbal provincialisms in

support of this theory, and there was something in the character of the man that rather went against it. Still, we clung to the opinion, till we found that philology was against us, and that the Falstaffs unquestionably came from Norfolk.

The name is of Scandinavian origin; and we find in *Domesday* that a certain Falstaff held freely from the king a church at Stamford. These facts are of great importance. The thirst for which Falstaff was always conspicuous was no doubt inherited—was, in fact, a Scandinavian thirst. The pirates of early English times drank as well as they fought, and their descendants who invade England—now that the war of commerce has superseded the war of conquest—still bring the old thirst with them, as any one can testify who has enjoyed the hospitality of the London Scandinavian Club. Then this church was no doubt a familiar landmark in the family; and when Falstaff stated, late in life, that if he hadn't forgotten what the inside of a church was like, he was a peppercorn and a brewer's horse, he was thinking with some remorse of the family temple.

Of the family between the Conquest and Falstaff's birth we know nothing, except that, according to Falstaff's statement, he had a grand-father who left him a seal ring worth forty marks. From this statement we might infer that the ring was an heirloom,

and consequently that Falstaff was an eldest son, and the head of his family. But we must be careful in drawing our inferences, for Prince Henry frequently told Falstaff that the ring was copper; and on one occasion, when Falstaff alleged that his pocket had been picked at the *Boar's Head*, and this seal-ring and three or four bonds of forty pounds apiece abstracted, the Prince assessed the total loss at eight-pence.

After giving careful attention to the evidence, and particularly to the conduct of Falstaff on the occasion of the alleged robbery, we come to the conclusion that the ring *was* copper, and was not an heirloom. This leaves us without any information about Falstaff's family prior to his birth. He was born (as he himself informs the Lord Chief Justice) about three o'clock in the afternoon, with a white head and something a round belly. Falstaff's corpulence, therefore, as well as his thirst, was congenital. Let those who are not born with his comfortable figure sigh in vain to attain his stately proportions. This is a thing which Nature gives us at our birth as much as the Scandinavian thirst or the shaping spirit of imagination.

Born somewhere in Norfolk, Falstaff's early months and years were no doubt rich with the promise of his after greatness. We have no record of



his infancy, and are tempted to supply the gap with Rabelais' chapters on Gargantua's babyhood. But regard for the truth compels us to add nothing that cannot fairly be deduced from the evidence. We leave the strapping boy in his swaddling-clothes to answer the question *when* he was born. Now, it is to be regretted that Falstaff, who was so precise about the hour of his birth, should not have mentioned the year. On this point we are again left to inference from conflicting statements. We have this distinct point to start from—that Falstaff, in or about the year 1401, gives his age as some fifty or by'r Lady inclining to three-score. It is true that in other places he represents himself as old, and again in another states that he and his accomplices in the Gadshill robbery are in the vaward of their youth. The Chief Justice reproves him for this affectation of youth, and puts a question (which, it is true, elicits no admission from Falstaff) as to whether every part of him is not blasted with antiquity.

We are inclined to think that Falstaff rather understated his age when he described himself as by'r Lady inclining to three-score, and that we shall not be far wrong if we set down 1340 as the year of his birth. We cannot be certain to a year or two. There is a similar uncertainty about the year of Sir Richard Whittington's birth. But both these great men,

whose careers afford in some respects striking contrasts, were born within a few years of the middle of the fourteenth century.

Falstaff's childhood was no doubt spent in Norfolk; and we learn from his own lips that he plucked geese, played truant, and whipped top, and that he did not escape beating. That he had brothers and sisters we know; for he tells us that he is *John* with them and *Sir John* with all Europe. We do not know the dame or pedant who taught his young idea how to shoot and formed his manners; but Falstaff says that *if* his manners became him not, he was a fool that taught them him. This does not throw much light on his early education: for it is not clear that the remark applies to that period, and in any case it is purely hypothetical.

But Falstaff, like so many boys since his time, left his home in the country and came to London. His brothers and sisters he left behind him, and we hear no more of them. Probably none of them ever attained eminence, as there is no record of Falstaff's having attempted to borrow money of them. We know Falstaff so well as a tun of a man, a horse-back-breaker, and so forth, that it is not easy to form an idea of what he was in his youth. But if we trace back the sack-stained current of his life to the day when, full of wonder and hope, he first rode into

London, we shall find him as different from Shakespeare's picture of him as the Thames at Iffley is from the Thames at London Bridge. His figure was shapely; he had no difficulty *then* in seeing his own knee, and if he was not able, as he afterwards asserted, to creep through an alderman's ring, nevertheless he had all the grace and activity of youth. He was just such a lad (to take a description almost contemporary) as the Squier who rode with the Canterbury Pilgrims :

A lovyere and a lusty bachelor,  
 With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse.  
 Of twenty yeer of age he was, I gesse.  
 Of his stature he was of evene lengthe,  
 And wonderly delyvere, and greet of strengthe.

Embrouded was he, as it were a meede,  
 Al ful of fresshe floures, whyte and reede;  
 Syngynge he was, or floytynge al the day;  
 He was as fressh as is the monthe of May.  
 Short was his gowne, with sleeves longe and wyde;  
 Wel koude he sitte on hors, and faire ryde;  
 He koude songes make, and wel endite,  
 Juste and eek daunce, and weel pourtreyc and write.  
 So hote he lovede, that by nyghtertale  
 He slep no more than doth a nyghtyngale.

Such was Falstaff at the age of twenty, or something earlier, when he entered at Clement's Inn, where were many other young men reading law, and preparing for their call to the Bar. How much law he read it is impossible now to ascertain. That he

had, in later life, a considerable knowledge of the subject is clear, but this may have been acquired like Mr. Micawber's, by experience, as defendant on civil process. We are inclined to think he read but little. *Amici fures temporis*: and he had many friends at Clement's Inn who were not smugs, nor, indeed, reading men in any sense. There was John Doit of Staffordshire, and Black George Barnes, and Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele, a Cotswold man, and Robert Shallow from Gloucestershire. Four of these were such swingbucklers as were not to be found again in all the Inns o' Court, and we have it on the authority of Justice Shallow that Falstaff was a good backswordsman, and that before he had done growing he broke the head of Skogan at the Court gate. This Skogan appears to have been Court-jester to Edward III. No doubt the natural rivalry between the amateur and the professional caused the quarrel, and Skogan must have been a good man if he escaped with a broken head only, and without damage to his reputation as a professional wit. The same day that Falstaff did this deed of daring—the only one of the kind recorded of him—Shallow fought with Sampson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray's Inn. Shallow was a gay dog in his youth, according to his own account: he was called Mad Shallow, Lusty Shallow—indeed, he was called anything. He played Sir

Dagonet in Arthur's show at Mile End Green; and no doubt Falstaff and the rest of the set were cast for other parts in the same pageant. These tall fellows of Clement's Inn kept well together, for they liked each other's company, and they needed each other's help in a row in Turnbull Street or elsewhere. Their watchword was "Hem, boys!" and they made the old Strand ring with their songs as they strolled home to their chambers of an evening. They heard the chimes at midnight—which, it must be confessed, does not seem to us a desperately dissipated entertainment. But midnight was a late hour in those days. The paralytic masher of the present day, who is most alive at midnight, rises at noon. *Then* the day began earlier with a long morning, followed by a pleasant period called the forenoon. Under modern conditions we spend the morning in bed, and to palliate our sloth call the forenoon and most of the rest of the day, the morning. These young men of Clement's Inn were a lively, not to say a rowdy, set. They would do anything that led to mirth or mischief. What passed when they lay all night in the wind-mill in St. George's Field we do not quite know; but we are safe in assuming that they did not go there to pursue their legal duties, or to grind corn. Anyhow, forty years after, that night raised pleasant memories.

John Falstaff was the life and centre of this set, as Robert Shallow was the butt of it. The latter had few personal attractions. According to Falstaff's portrait of him, he looked like a man made after supper of a cheese-paring. When he was naked he was for all the world like a forked radish, with a head fantastically carved upon it with a knife: he was so forlorn that his dimensions to any thick sight were invincible: he was the very genius of famine; and a certain section of his friends called him mandrake: he came ever in the rearward of the fashion, and sung those tunes to the over-scutched huswives that he heard the carmen whistle, and swore they were his fancies or his good-nights. Then he had the honour of having his head burst by John o' Gaunt, for crowding among the Marshal's men in the Tilt-yard, and this was matter for continual gibe from Falstaff and the other boys. Falstaff was in the van of the fashion, was witty himself without being at that time the cause that wit was in others. No one could come within range of his wit without being attracted and overpowered. Late in life Falstaff deplores nothing so much in the character of Prince John of Lancaster as this, that a man cannot make him laugh. He felt this defect in the Prince's character keenly, for laughter was Falstaff's familiar spirit, which never failed to come at his call. It was by laughter that

young Falstaff fascinated his friends and ruled over them. There are only left to us a few scraps of his conversation, and these have been, and will be to all time, the delight of all good men. The Clement's Inn boys who enjoyed the feast, of which we have but the crumbs left to us, were happy almost beyond the lot of man. For there is more in laughter than is allowed by the austere, or generally recognised by the jovial. By laughter man is distinguished from the beasts, but the cares and sorrows of life have all but deprived man of this distinguishing grace, and degraded him to a brutal solemnity. Then comes (alas, how rarely!) a genius such as Falstaff's, which restores the power of laughter and transforms the stolid brute into man. This genius approaches nearly to the divine power of creation, and we may truly say, "Some for less were deified." It is no marvel that young Falstaff's friends assiduously served the deity who gave them this good gift. At first he was satisfied with the mere exercise of his genial power, but he afterwards made it serviceable to him. It was but just that he should receive tribute from those who were beholden to him, for a pleasure which no other could confer.

It was now that Falstaff began to recognise what a precious gift was his congenital Scandinavian thirst, and to lose no opportunity of gratifying it. We have

his mature views on education, and we may take them as an example of the general truth that old men habitually advise a young one to shape the conduct of his life after their own. Pightly to apprehend the virtues of sherris-sack is the first qualification in an instructor of youth. "If I had a thousand sons," says he, "the first humane principles I would teach them should be to forswear thin potations, and to addict themselves to sack;" and further: "There's never none of these demure boys come to any proof; for their drink doth so over-cool their blood, and making many fish-meals, that they fall into a kind of male green sickness; and then when they marry they get wenches: they are generally fools and cowards, which some of us should be too but for inflammation." There can be no doubt that Falstaff did not in early life over-cool his blood, but addicted himself to sack, and gave the subject a great part of his attention for all the remainder of his days.

It may be that he found the subject too absorbing to allow of his giving much attention to old Father Antic the Law. At any rate, he was never called to the Bar, and posterity cannot be too thankful that his great mind was not lost in "the abyss of legal eminence" which has received so many men who might have adorned their country. That he was fitted for a brilliant legal career can admit of no



doubt. His power of detecting analogies in cases apparently different, his triumphant handling of cases apparently hopeless, his wonderful readiness in reply, and his dramatic instinct, would have made him a powerful advocate. It may have been owing to difficulties with the Benchers of the period over questions of discipline, or it may have been a distaste for the profession itself, which induced him to throw up the law and adopt the profession of arms.

We know that while he was still at Clement's Inn he was page to Lord Thomas Mowbray, who was afterwards created Earl of Nottingham and Duke of Norfolk. It must be admitted that here (as elsewhere in Shakespeare) there is some little chronological difficulty. We will not inquire too curiously, but simply accept the testimony of Justice Shallow on the point. Mowbray was an able and ambitious lord, and Falstaff, as page to him, began his military career with every advantage. The French wars of the later years of Edward III gave frequent and abundant opportunity for distinction. Mowbray distinguished himself in Court and in camp, and we should like to believe that Falstaff was in the sea-fight when Mowbray defeated the French fleet and captured vast quantities of sack from the enemy. Unfortunately, there is no record whatever of Falstaff's early military career, and beyond his own

ejaculation, "Would to God that my name was not so terrible to the enemy as it is!" and the (possible) inference from it that he must have made his name terrible in some way, we have no evidence that he was ever in the field before the battle of Shrewsbury. Indeed, the absence of evidence on this matter goes strongly to prove the negative. Falstaff boasts of his valour, his alacrity, and other qualities which were not apparent to the casual observer, but he never boasts of his services in battle. If there had been anything of the kind to which he could refer with complacency, there is no moral doubt that he would have mentioned it freely, adding such embellishments and circumstances as he well knew how.

In the absence of evidence as to the course of life, we are left to conjecture how he spent the forty years, more or less, between the time of his studies at Clement's Inn and the day when Shakespeare introduces him to us. We have no doubt that he spent all, or nearly all, this time in London. His habits were such as are formed by life in a great city: his conversation betrays a man who has lived, as it were, in a crowd, and the busy haunts of men were the appropriate scene for the display of his great qualities. London, even then, was a great city, and the study of it might well absorb a lifetime. Falstaff knew it well, from the Court, with which

he always preserved a connexion, to the numerous taverns where he met his friends and eluded his creditors. The *Boar's Head* in Eastcheap was his headquarters, and, like Barnabee's, two centuries later, his journeys were from tavern to tavern; and, like Barnabee, he might say "Multum bibi, nunquam pransi." To begin with, no doubt the dinner bore a fair proportion to the fluid which accompanied it, but by degrees the liquor encroached on and superseded the viands, until his tavern bills took the shape of the one purloined by Prince Henry, in which there was but one halfpennyworth of bread to an intolerable deal of sack. It was this inordinate consumption of sack (and not sighing and grief, as he suggests) which blew him up like a bladder. A life of leisure in London always had, and still has, its temptations. Falstaff's means were described by the Chief Justice of Henry IV as very slender, but this was after they had been wasted for years. Originally they were more ample, and gave him the opportunity of living at ease with his friends. No domestic cares disturbed the even tenor of his life. Bardolph says he was better accommodated than with a wife. Like many another man about town, he thought about settling down when he was getting up in years. He weekly swore, so he tells us, to marry old Mistress Ursula, but this was only after he saw the first white

hair on his chin. But he never led Mistress Ursula to the altar. The only other women for whom he formed an early attachment were Mistress Quickly, the hostess of the *Boar's Head*, and Doll Tearsheet, who is described by the page as a proper gentlewoman, and a kinswoman of his master's. There is no denying that Falstaff was on terms of intimacy with Mistress Quickly, but he never admitted that he made her an offer of marriage. She, however, asserted it in the strongest terms and with a wealth of circumstance.

We must transcribe her story: "Thou didst swear to me upon a parcel-gilt goblet, sitting in my Dolphin-chamber, at the round table, by a sea-coal fire, upon Wednesday in Whitsun-Week, when the Prince broke thy head for liking his father to a singing-man of Windsor; thou didst swear to me then, as I was washing thy wound, to marry me, and make me my lady thy wife. Canst thou deny it? Did not goodwife Keech, the butcher's wife, come in then, and call me Gossip Quickly? coming in to borrow a mess of vinegar; telling us she had a good dish of prawns; whereby thou didst desire to eat some; whereby I told thee they were ill for a green wound? And didst thou not, when she was gone downstairs, desire me to be no more familiarity with such poor people; saying ere long they should call me madam? And didst thou not kiss me,

and bid me fetch thee thirty shillings? I put thee now to thy book-oath; deny it if thou canst! ”

We feel no doubt that if Mistress Quickly had given this evidence in action for breach of promise of marriage, and goodwife Keech corroborated it, the jury would have found a verdict for the plaintiff, unless indeed they brought in a special verdict to the effect that Falstaff made the promise, but never intended to keep it. But Mistress Quickly contented herself with upbraiding Falstaff, and he cajoled her with his usual skill, and borrowed more money of her.

Falstaff's attachment for Doll Tearsheet lasted many years, but did not lead to matrimony. From the Clement's Inn days till he was three-score he lived in London celibate, and his habits and amusements were much like those of other single gentlemen about town of his time, or, for that matter, of ours. He had only himself to care for, and he cared for himself well. Like his page, he had a good angel about him, but the devil outbid him. He was as virtuously given as other folk, but perhaps the devil had a handle for temptation in that congenital thirst of his. He was a social spirit too, and he tells us that company, villainous company, was the spoil of him. He was less than thirty when he took the faithful Bardolph into his service, and only just past that age when he made the acquaintance of the nimble Poins. Before he was

forty he became the constant guest of Mistress Quickly. Pistol and Nym were later acquisitions, and the Prince did not come upon the scene till Falstaff was an old man and knighted.

There is some doubt as to when he obtained this honour. Richard II bestowed titles in so lavish a manner as to cause discontent among many who didn't receive them. In 1377, immediately on his accession, the Earldom of Nottingham was given to Thomas Mowbray, and on the same day three other earls and nine knights were created. We have not been able to discover the names of these knights, but we confidently expect to unearth them some day, and to find the name of Sir John Falstaff among them. We have already stated that Falstaff had done no service in the field at this time, so he could not have earned his title in that manner. No doubt he got it through the influence of Mowbray, who was in a position to get good things for his friends as well as for himself. It was but a poor acknowledgment for the inestimable benefit of occasionally talking with Falstaff over a quart of sack.

We will not pursue Falstaff's life further than this. It can from this point be easily collected. It is a thankless task to paraphrase a great and familiar text. To attempt to tell the story in better words than Shakespeare would occur to no one but Miss

Braddon, who has epitomised Sir Walter, or to Canon Farrar, who has elongated the Gospels. But we feel bound to add a few words as to character. There are, we fear, a number of people who regard Falstaff as a worthless fellow, and who would refrain (if they could) from laughing at his jests. These people do not understand his claim to grateful and affectionate regard. He did more to produce that mental condition of which laughter is the expression than any man who ever lived. But for the cheering presence of him, and men like him, this vale of tears would be a more terrible dwelling-place than it is. In short, Falstaff has done an immense deal to alleviate misery and promote positive happiness. What more can be said of your heroes and philanthropists?

It is, perhaps, characteristic of this commercial age that benevolence should be always associated, if not considered synonymous, with the giving of money. But this is clearly mistaken, for we have to consider what effect the money given produces on the minds and bodies of human beings. Sir Richard Whittington was an eminently benevolent man, and spent his money freely for the good of his fellow-citizens. (We sincerely hope, by the way, that he lent some of it to Falstaff without security.) He endowed hospitals and other charities. Hundreds were relieved by his gifts, and thousands (perhaps) are now

in receipt of his alms. This is well. Let the sick and the poor who enjoy his hospitality and receive his doles, bless his memory. But how much wider and further-reaching is the influence of Falstaff! Those who enjoy his good things are not only the poor and the sick, but all who speak the English language. Nay, more; translation has made him the inheritance of the world, and the benefactor of the entire human race.

It may be, however, that some other nations fail fully to understand and appreciate the mirth and the character of the man. A Dr. G. G. Gervinus, of Heidelberg, has written, in the German language, a heavy work on Shakespeare, in which he attacks Falstaff in a very solemn and determined manner, and particularly charges him with selfishness and want of conscience. We are inclined to set down this malignant attack to envy. Falstaff is the author and cause of universal laughter. Dr. Gervinus will never be the cause of anything universal; but, so far as his influence extends, he produces headaches. It is probably a painful sense of this contrast that goads on the author of headaches to attack the author of laughter.

But is there anything in the charge? We do not claim anything like perfection, or even saintliness, for Falstaff. But we may say of him, as Byron says of Venice, that his very vices are of the gentler sort. And



as for this charge of selfishness and want of conscience, we think that the words of Bardolph on his master's death are an overwhelming answer to it. Bardolph said, on hearing the news: "I would I were with him wheresoever he is: whether he be in heaven or hell." Bardolph was a mere serving-man, not of the highest sensibility, and he for thirty years knew his master as his valet knows the hero. Surely the man who could draw such an expression of feeling from his rough servant is not the man to be lightly charged with selfishness! Which of us can hope for such an epitaph, not from a hireling, but from our nearest and dearest? Does Dr. Gervinus know any one who will make such a reply to a posthumous charge against him of dullness and lack of humour?

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## DON QUIXOTE

A SPANISH knight, about fifty years of age, who lived in great poverty in a village of La Mancha, gave himself up so entirely to reading the romances of chivalry, of which he had a large collection, that in the end they turned his brain, and nothing would satisfy him but that he must ride abroad on his old horse, armed with spear and helmet, a knight-errant, to encounter all adventures, and to redress the innumerable wrongs of the world. He induced a neighbour of his, a poor and ignorant peasant called Sancho Panza, mounted on a very good ass, to accompany him as squire. The knight saw the world only in the mirror of his beloved romances; he mistook inns for enchanted castles, windmills for giants, and country wenches for exiled princesses. His high spirit and his courage never failed him, but his illusions led him into endless trouble. In the name of justice and chivalry he intruded himself on all whom he met, and assaulted all whom he took to be making an oppressive or discourteous use of power. He and his poor squire were beaten, trounced, cheated, and ridiculed on all hands, until in the end, by the kindness of his old friends in the village, and with the help of some new friends who had been touched by the amiable and

generous character of his illusions, the knight was cured of his whimsies and was led back to his home in the village, there to die.

That is the story of Don Quixote: it seems a slight framework for what, without much extravagance, may be called the wisest and most splendid book in the world. It is an old man's book; there is in it all the wisdom of a fiery heart that has learned patience. Shakespeare and Cervantes died on the same day, but if Cervantes had died at the same age as Shakespeare we should have had no *Don Quixote*. Shakespeare himself has written nothing so full of the diverse stuff of experience, so quietly and steadily illuminated by gentle wisdom, so open-eyed in discerning the strength of the world; and Shakespeare himself is not more courageous in championing the rights of the gallant heart. Suppose the Governor of Barataria had been called on to decide the cause between these two great authors. His judgments were often wonderfully simple and obvious. Perhaps he would have ruled that whereas Shakespeare died at the age of fifty-two and Cervantes lived seventeen years longer, a man shall give his days and nights to the study of Shakespeare until he is older than ever Shakespeare was, and then, for the solace of his later years, shall pass on to the graver school of Cervantes. Not every man lives longer than Shakespeare;

and, of those who do, not every man masters the art and craft of growing older with the passage of years, so that, by this rule, the Spanish gentleman would have a much smaller circle of intimates than the High Bailiff's son of Stratford. And so he has; yet his world-wide popularity is none the less assured. He has always attracted, and will always attract, a great company of readers who take a simple and legitimate delight in the comic distresses of the deluded Don, in the tricks put upon him, in the woeful absurdity of his appearance, in the many love-stories and love-songs that he hears, in the variety of the characters that he meets, in the wealth of the incidents and events that spring up, a joyous crop, wherever he sets his foot, and not least, perhaps, in the beatings, poundings, scratchings, and tumblings in the mire that are his daily portion. That is to say, those who care little or nothing for Don Quixote may yet take pleasure in the life that is in his book; and his book is full of life.

We have no very ample record of the life experiences of Cervantes, which are distilled in this, his greatest book. We know that he was a soldier, and fought against the Turks at Lepanto, where his left hand was maimed for life; that he was made prisoner some years later by the Moors, and suffered five years' captivity at Algiers; that he attempted with others to

escape, and when discovered and cross-examined took the whole responsibility on himself; that at last he was ransomed by the efforts of his family and friends, and returned to Spain, there to live as best he could the life of a poor man of letters, with intermittent Government employ, for thirty-six more years. He wrote sonnets and plays, pawned his family's goods, and was well acquainted with the inside of prisons. He published the First Part of *Don Quixote* in 1605—that is to say, in his fifty-eighth year—and thenceforward enjoyed a high reputation, though his poverty continued. In 1615 the Second Part of *Don Quixote* appeared, wherein the author makes delightful play with the First Part by treating it as a book well known to all the characters of the story. In the following year he died, clothed in the Franciscan habit, and was buried in the convent of the Barefooted Trinitarian Nuns in Madrid. No stone marks his grave, but his spirit still wanders the world in the person of the finest gentleman of all the realms of fact and fable, who still maintains in discourse with all whom he meets that the thing of which the world has most need is knights-errant, to do honour to women, to fight for the cause of the oppressed, and to right the wrong. ‘This, then, gentlemen,’ he may still be heard saying, ‘it is to be a knight-errant, and what I have spoken of is the order of chivalry, in the which,

as I have already said, I, though a sinner, have made profession; the same which these famous knights profess do I profess; and that is why I am travelling through these deserts and solitary places, in quest of adventures, with deliberate resolve to offer my arm and my person to the most dangerous adventure which fortune may present, in aid of the weak and needy.' And the world is still incredulous and dazed. 'By these words which he uttered,' says the author in brief comment on the foregoing speech, 'the travellers were quite convinced that Don Quixote was out of his wits'

It has often been said, and is still sometimes repeated by good students of Cervantes, that his main object in writing *Don Quixote* was to put an end to the influence of the romances of chivalry. It is true that these romances were the fashionable reading of his age, that many of them were trash, and that some of them were pernicious trash. It is true also that the very scheme of his book lends itself to a scathing exposure of their weaknesses, and that the moral is pointed in the scene of the Inquisition of the Books, where the priest, the barber, the housekeeper, and the niece destroy the greater part of his library by fire. But how came it that Cervantes knew the romances so well, and dwelt on some of their incidents in such loving detail? Moreover, it is worth noting that not

a few of them are excluded by name from the general condemnation. *Amadis of Gaul* is spared, because it is 'the best of all books of the kind.' Equal praise is given to *Palmerin of England*; while of *Tirante the White* the priest himself declares that it is a treasure of delight and a mine of pastime.

'Truly, I declare to you, gossip, that in its style this is the best book in the world. Here the knights eat and sleep, and die in their beds, and make their wills before they die, with other things in which the rest of the books of this kind are wanting.'

But even stronger evidence of the esteem that Cervantes felt for the best of the romances is to be found in his habit of linking their names with the poems of Homer and Virgil. So, in the course of instruction given by Don Quixote to Sancho Panza, while they dwelt in the wilds of the Sierra Morena, Ulysses is cited as the model of prudence and patience, Aeneas as the greatest of pious sons and expert captains, and Amadis as the 'pole star, the morning star, the sun of valiant and enamoured knights, whom all we have to copy, who do battle under the banner of love and chivalry.' It would indeed be a strange thing if a book which is so brave an exercise of the creative imagination, were mainly destructive in its aim, and deserved no higher honour than a scavenger. The truth is that the book is so many-sided that all kinds

of tastes and beliefs can find their warrant in it. The soul of it is an irony so profound that but few of its readers have explored it to the depths. It is like a mine, deep below deep; and much good treasure is to be found at the more easily accessible levels. All irony criticizes the imperfect ideas and theories of mankind, not by substituting for them other ideas and other theories, less imperfect, but by placing the facts of life, in mute comment, alongside of the theories. The Ruler of the World is the great master of irony; and man has been permitted to share some part of his enjoyment in the purifying power of fact. The weaker and more querulous members of the race commonly try to enlist the facts in the service of their pet ideas. A grave and deep spirit like Cervantes knows that the facts will endure no such servitude. They will not take orders from those who call for their verdict, nor will they be content to speak only when they are asked to speak. They intrude suddenly, in the most amazing and irrelevant fashion, on the carefully ordered plans of humanity. They cannot be explained away, and many a man who thought to have guarded himself against surprise has been surprised by love and death.

Every one sees the irony of *Don Quixote* in its first degree, and enjoys it in its more obvious forms. This absurd old gentleman, who tries to put his anti-



quoted ideas into action in a busy, selfish, prosy world, is a figure of fun even to the meanest intelligence. But, with more thought, there comes a check to our frivolity. Is not all virtue and all goodness in the same case as Don Quixote? Does the author, after all, mean to say that the world is right, and that those who try to better it are wrong? If that is what he means, how is it that at every step of our journey we come to like the Don better, until in the end we can hardly put a limit to our love and reverence for him? Is it possible that the criticism is double-edged, and that what we are celebrating with our laughter is the failure of the world?

A wonderful thing in Cervantes's handling of his story is his absolute honesty and candour. He does not mince matters. His world behaves as the world may be expected to behave when its daily interests are violently disordered by a lunatic. Failure upon failure dogs the steps of poor Don Quixote, and he has no popularity to redeem his material disasters. 'He who writes of me,' says the Don pensively, in his discussion with the bachelor Sampson, 'will please very few;' and the only comfort the bachelor can find for him is that the number of fools is infinite, and that the First Part of his adventures has delighted them all. As an example of Cervantes's treatment, take one of the earliest of these adventures, the rescue

of the boy Andres from the hands of his oppressor. As he rode away from the inn, on the first day of his knighthood, while yet he was unfurnished with a squire, Don Quixote heard cries of complaint from a thicket near by. He thanked Heaven for giving him so early an opportunity of service, and turned his horse aside to where he found a farmer beating a boy. Don Quixote, with all knightly formality, called the farmer a coward, and challenged him to single combat. The farmer, terrified by the strange apparition, explained that the boy was his servant and by gross carelessness had lost sheep for him at the rate of one a day. The matter was at last settled by the farmer liberating the boy and promising to pay him in full his arrears of wages; whereupon the knight rode away, well pleased. Then the farmer tied up the boy again, and beat him more severely than ever, till at the last he loosed him, and told him to go and seek redress from his champion. 'So the boy departed sobbing, and his master stayed behind laughing, and after this manner did the valorous Don Quixote right that wrong.' Later on, when the knight and his squire are in the wilds, with the company whom chance has gathered around them, the boy appears again, and Don Quixote narrates the story of his deliverance as an illustration of the benefits conferred on the world by knight-errantry.

‘ All that your worship says is true,’ replies the lad, ‘ but the end of the business was very much the contrary of what your worship imagines.’ ‘ How contrary?’ said Don Quixote. ‘ Did he not pay thee, then?’ ‘ He not only did not pay me,’ said the boy, ‘ but as soon as your worship had got outside the wood, and we were alone, he tied me again to the same tree, and gave me so many lashes that he left me flayed like St. Bartholomew; and at every lash he gave me, he uttered some jest or scoff, to make a mock of your worship; and if I had not felt so much pain, I would have laughed at what he said. . . . For all this your worship is to blame, because if you had held on your way, and had not meddled with other people’s business, my master would have been content to give me a dozen or two lashes, and afterwards he would have released me and paid me what he owed. But as your worship insulted him and called him bad names, his anger was kindled, and as he could not avenge himself on you, he let fly the tempest on me.’

Don Quixote sadly admits his error, and confesses that he ought to have remembered that ‘ no churl keeps the word he gives if he finds that it does not suit him to keep it.’ But he promises Andres that he will yet see him righted; and with that the boy’s terror awakes. ‘ For the love of God, sir knight-errant,’ he says, ‘ if you meet me again, and see me

being cut to pieces, do not rescue me, nor help me, but leave me to my pain; for, however great it be, it cannot be greater than will come to me from the help of your worship—when, with all the knights-errant ever born into the world, may God confound! ' With that he ran away, and Don Quixote stood very much abashed by his story, so that the rest of the company had to take great care that they did not laugh outright and put him to confusion.

At no point in the story does Cervantes permit the reader to forget that the righter of wrongs must not look in this world for either success or praise. The indignities heaped upon that gentle and heroic soul almost revolt the reader, as Charles Lamb remarked. He is beaten and kicked; he has his teeth knocked out, and consoles himself with the thought that these hardships are incident to his profession; his face is all bedaubed with mud, and he answers with grave politeness to the mocks of those who deride him. When he stands sentry on the back of his horse at the inn, to guard the sleepers, the stable wench, Martines, gets him to reach up his hand to an upper window, or rather a round hole in the wall of the hayloft, whereupon she slips a running noose over his wrist and ties the rope firmly to a bar within the loft. In this posture, and in continual danger of being hung by the arm if his horse should move away, he stands

till dawn, when four travellers knock at the gate of the inn. He at once challenges them for their discourtesy in disturbing the slumbers of those whom he is guarding. Even the Duke and the Duchess, who feel kindly to Don Quixote and take him under their care, are quite ready to play rough practical jokes on him. It is while he is their guest that his face is all scratched and clawed by frightened cats turned loose in his bedroom at night. His friends in the village were kinder than this, but they, to get him home, carried him through the country in a latticed cage on poles, like a wild beast, for the admiration of the populace; and he bethought himself, 'As I am a new knight in the world, and the first that hath revived the forgotten exercise of chivalry, these are newly invented forms of enchantment.' His spirit rises superior to all his misfortunes, and his mind remains as serene as a cloudless sky.

But Don Quixote, it may be objected, is mad. Here the irony of Cervantes finds a deeper level. Don Quixote is a high-minded idealist, who sees all things by the light of his own lofty preconceptions. To him every woman is beautiful and adorable; everything that is said to him is worthy to be heard with attention and respect; every community of men, even the casual assemblage of lodgers at an inn, is a society founded on strict rules of mutual consideration and esteem.

He shapes his behaviour in accordance with these ideas, and is laughed at for his pains. But he has a squire, Sancho Panza, who is a realist and loves food and sleep, who sees the world as it is, by the light of common day. Sancho, it might be supposed, is sane, and supplies a sure standard whereby to measure his master's deviations from the normal. Not at all; Sancho, in his own way, is as mad as his master. If the one is betrayed by fantasy, the other is betrayed, with as ludicrous a result, by common sense. The thing is well seen in the question of the island, the government of which is to be intrusted to Sancho when Don Quixote comes into his kingdom. Sancho, though he would have seen through the pretences of any merely corrupt bargainer, recognizes at once that his master is disinterested and truthful, and he believes all he hears about the island. He spends much thought on the scheme, and passes many criticisms on it. Sometimes he protests that he is quite unfit for the position of a governor, and that his wife would cut a poor figure as a governor's lady. At other times he vehemently asserts that many men of much less ability than himself are governors, and eat every day off silver plate. Then he hears that if an island should not come to hand, he is to be rewarded with a slice of a continent, and at once he stipulates that his domain shall be situated on the coast, so that he

may put his subjects to a profitable use by selling them into slavery. It is not a gloss upon Cervantes to say that Sancho is mad; the suggestion is made, with significant repetition, in the book itself. 'As the Lord liveth,' says the barber, addressing the squire, 'I begin to think that thou oughtest to keep him company in the cage, and that thou art as much enchanted as he. In an evil day wast thou impregnated with his promises, and it was a sorrowful hour when the island of thy longings entered thy skull.'

So these two, in the opinion of the neighbours, are both mad, yet most of the wisdom of the book is theirs, and when neither of them is talking, the book falls into mere commonplace. And this also is many times recognized and commented on in the book itself. Sometimes it is the knight, and sometimes the squire, whose conversation makes the hearers marvel that one who talks with so much wisdom, justice, and discernment should act so foolishly. Certainly the book is a paradise of delightful discourse wherein all topics are handled and are presented in a new guise. The dramatic setting, which is the meaning of the book, is never forgotten; yet the things said are so good that when they are taken out of their setting they shine still, though with diminished splendour. What could be better than Don Quixote's treatment of the question of lineage, when he is considering his future

claim to marry the beautiful daughter of a Christian or paynim King? 'There are two kinds of lineage,' he remarks. 'The difference is this—that some were what they are not, and others are what they were not; and when the thing is looked into I might prove to be one of those who had a great and famous origin, with which the King, my father-in-law who is to be, must be content.' Or what could be wiser than Sancho's account of his resignation of the governorship? 'Yesterday morning I left the island as I found it, with the same streets, houses, and tiles which they had when I went there. I have borrowed nothing of nobody, nor mixed myself up with the making of profits, and though I thought to make some profitable laws, I did not make any of them, for I was afraid they would not be kept, which would be just the same as if they had never been made.' Many of those who come across the pair in the course of their wanderings fall under the fascination of their talk. Not only so, but the world of imagination in which the two wanderers live proves so attractive, the infection of their ideas is so strong, that, long before the end of the story is reached, a motley company of people, from the Duke and Duchess down to the villagers, have set their own business aside in order to take part in the make-believe and to be the persons of Don Quixote's dream. There was never any Kingdom of Barataria; but the hearts



of all who knew him were set on seeing how Sancho would comport himself in the office of Governor, so the Duke lent a village for the purpose, and it was put in order and furnished with officers of State for the part that it had to play. In this way some of the fancies of the talkers almost struggle into existence, and the dream of Don Quixote makes the happiness it does not find.

Nothing in the story is more touching than the steadily growing attachment and mutual admiration of the knight and the squire. Each deeply respects the wisdom of the other, though Don Quixote, whose taste in speech is courtly, many times complains of Sancho's swarm of proverbs. Each is influenced by the other; the knight insists on treating the squire with the courtesies due to an equal, and poor Sancho, in the end, declares that not all the governments of the world shall tempt him away from the service of his beloved master. What, then, are we to think, and what does their creator think, of those two madmen, whose lips drop wisdom? 'Mark you, Sancho,' said Don Quixote, 'there are two kinds of beauty—one of the soul, and another of the body. That of the soul excelleth in knowledge, in modesty, in fine conduct, in liberality and good breeding; and all these virtues are found in, and may belong to, an ugly man. . . . I see full well, Sancho, that I am not beautiful, but

I know also that I am not deformed, and it is enough for a man of honour to be no monster; he may be well loved, if he possesses those gifts of soul which I have mentioned.' Sometimes, at the height of his frenzy, the knight seems almost inspired. So, when the shepherds have entertained him, he offers, by way of thanks, to maintain against all comers the fame and beauty of the shepherdesses, and utters his wonderful little speech on gratitude:

'For the most part, he who receives is inferior to him who gives; and hence God is above all, because he is above all, the great giver; and the gifts of man cannot be equal to those of God, for there is an infinite distance between them; and the narrowness and insufficiency of the gifts of man is eked out by gratitude.

There cannot be too much of this kind of madness. Well may Don Antonio cry out on the bachelor Sampson, who dresses himself as the Knight of the Silver Moon and overthrows Don Quixote in fight:

'O sir, may God forgive you the wrong you have done to all the world in desiring to make a sane man of the most gracious madman that the world contains! Do you not perceive that the profit which shall come from the healing of Don Quixote can never be equal to the pleasure which is caused by his ecstasies?'

What if the world itself is mad, not with the ecstasy of Don Quixote, nor with the thrifty madness of

Sancho, but with a flat kind of madness, a makeshift compromise between faith and doubt? All men have a vein of Quixotry somewhere in their nature. They can be counted on, in most things, to follow the beaten path of interest and custom, till suddenly there comes along some question on which they refuse to appeal to interest; they take their stand on principle, and are adamant. All men know in themselves the mood of Sancho, when he says:

‘I have heard the preachers preach that we should love our Lord for himself alone, without being moved to it by the hope of glory or the fear of pain; but, for my own part, I would love him for what he is able to do for me.’

These two moods, the mood of Quixote and the mood of Sancho, seem to divide between them most of the splendours and most of the comforts of human life. It is rare to find either mood in its perfection. A man who should consistently indulge in himself the mood of the unregenerate Sancho would be a rogue, though, if he preserved good temper in his doings, he would be a pleasant rogue. The man who should maintain in himself the mood of Quixote would be something very like a saint. The saints of the Church Militant would find no puzzle and no obscurity in the character of the Knight of La Mancha. Some of them, perhaps, would understand, better than Don Quixote

understood, that the full record of his doings, compiled by Cervantes, is both a tribute to the saintly character, and a criticism of it. They certainly could not fail to discover the religious kernel of the book, as the world, in the easy confidence of its own superiority, has failed to discover it. They would know that whoso loseth his life shall save it; they would not find it difficult to understand how Don Quixote, and, in his own degree, Sancho, was willing to be a fool, that he, and the world with him, might be made wise. Above all, they would appreciate the more squalid misadventures of Don Quixote, for, unlike the public, which recognizes the saint by his aureole, they would know, none better, that the way they have chosen is the way of contempt, and that Christianity was nursed in a manger.

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